THE SEAMLESS ROBE

ADA CARTER

Mrs. [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
San Francisco Cal.

THE SEAMLESS ROBE

THE SEAMLESS ROBE

BY

ADA CARTER

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

"Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

—PAUL.

"Realism will at length be found to surpass imagination, and to suit and savour all literature."

—MARY BAKER G. EDDY.

NEW YORK
A. WESSELS
1909

Copyright, 1907
JAMES D. PINKER

Copyright, 1909
NEWOLD PUBLISHING CO.

DEDICATION

To all nations and all kindreds this book is dedicated and sent forth upon its journey through the world, with the desire that it may speed Love's sweet message from city to city, there proclaiming from every house-top the glory of a promise in swift process of fulfilment; going also out into the highways and hedges and, with tender compulsion, bidding the hungry "come in"; whispering the while to the waiting heart the mighty truth that holiness and health, twin offspring of Soul, dwell ever hand in hand; bidding the dormant heart awake and know that the veil of materialism *is* rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and upraising the earth-bound eyes to behold Man, Godlike in his immortality, ***Christlike in his perfect health.***

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE 11

PART I

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

OR

TANGLED THREADS IN THE HAND OF MAN

CHAPTER

I. MIST 21

II. SHADOW-LAND 27

III. MENTAL ASSASSINATION 30

IV. THE MESMERISM OF FEAR; OR, "THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW" 39

V. THE UNBURIED DEAD; OR, "THE FRUIT OF HIS BODY FOR THE SIN OF HIS SOUL" . . 49

VI. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN 59

VII. THE WORLD, THE FLESH AND EVIL . . . 63

PART II

MORTALS WEAVING IN THE DARK

VIII. A MAN AND A WOMAN 75

IX. DAY DREAMS 86

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
X.	Partial Eclipse	93
XI.	Total Eclipse	102
XII.	Derelict	109
XIII.	"Man, Whose Breath is in His Nostrils"	119
XIV.	Angola	127

Part III

A THREAD OF GOLD IN THE HAND OF GOD

XV.	The Midnight Call	141
XVI.	Newness of Life	151
XVII.	Ebb and Flow	156
XVIII.	Human Limitations	165
XIX.	Self-Deception	174
XX.	Mental Fermentation	178
XXI.	A Barque—With White Sails Unfurled	182
XXII.	Called	191
XXIII.	Domestic Tyranny	199

Part IV

BROKEN SHUTTLES UPON THE TABLE OF TIME

XXIV.	The Recantation	213
XXV.	Hate	223
XXVI.	Castles Built Upon Shifting Sands	229
XXVII.	The Flood-Tide	238
XXVIII.	A Barque — Storm-Tossed Upon a Stormy Sea	243

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXIX.	Egypt	250
XXX.	Mesmerized	254
XXXI.	Clouds of Sense	263
XXXII.	Confusion	272
XXXIII.	The Man-Made Hell of Man	280

Part V

WHITE WARP AND WOOF IN THE LOOM OF MIND

XXXIV.	Looking Towards the Light	293
XXXV.	The Question	302
XXXVI.	The Answer	314
XXXVII.	The Swing of the Pendulum	328
XXXVIII.	Peniel	337
XXXIX.	Out of Darkness Into His Marvellous Light	344
XL.	A Lonely Barque Upon the Mighty Deep	355
XLI.	Scaling the Higher Heights	360
	Epilogue	368

PROLOGUE

Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright.
—*Ecclesiastes.*

I KNOW not how most books are written.

I know how this one came to me—oft troubling me in the long night watch, when otherwise I would have slept; oft flashing across my busy path and, with soft compelling touch, bidding me "Be still and write"; and always, when it came, filling my heart with a great desire, thus stilling my life with the silence of prayer.

. . . . .

I, the prisoner, lay upon my bed.

The June sunshine streamed in through the open window, and joined hands with the mirror. Together, they threw gay discs of light—bright-hued as is the opal fire—upon my prison walls, there to coquet among a pretence of climbing roses—roses drawn by a hand that loved them, drawn even while they grew. How else did they speak of summer gardens and sweet June life? How else did they whisper to the gentle breeze that seemed to stir their leaves? How else did the bud speak so clearly of promise, and the bloom smile with the rapture of hope passed into fruition? I had chosen that paper in spite of protest. "The carmine will fade," they told me. No matter! My will was law: but even as paste touched paper, I sighed, realising that always I commanded, except in the one thing for which I greatly longed—the one thing that I had asked of life for many weary years.

That midsummer day, my restless glance left the dancing discs of light and turned outward, there to linger momentarily upon the grace and beauty of the silver birch. The brightness of its summer robe, the tender whiteness of its bark and the gentle yielding of its rounded limbs held my thought to love—to love most passing fair, but all too frail, and thus imperfect, holding within itself the seeds of death, the doom of all mortality.

Roving onward, deep crimson and palest rose caught my eye and chained it, a willing captive, to the queenly rhododendron, whose crowns of royal splendour gave token of the lavish month of June. What a wealth of living colour was there! Its charm increased, its beauty doubled, as, earth meeting sky, each wound loving arms about the other in the clear waters of the lake. Tossed upon the bright blue of reflected ether, lay round clouds, richly white. Nestling within their bosom, half hidden, half revealed, softly blushed the rhododendron. Now meeting with the quick embrace of love, now parting with a lingering touch, the boughs of noble elm and bending birch caressed the whole, picturing the while burnished greens and purple greys upon the shining surface beneath their feet.

I, the prisoner, manacled to my bed, turned face to pillow and groaned within my heart, "How long, dear God! how long! . . . The glory of heaven upon earth out there: within my soul—the pangs of hell! And betwixt the two—a great gulf fixed!"

. . . . .

One day I found upon my bed a little book: black it was, and ordinary.

Three times I threw it from me. Three times he brought it back.

Yet once again he pleaded, "Beloved, if not for your own, for my sake, and for theirs!"

"Sweet," I said at last, "for your sake and for theirs, I will try to understand."

I held the thing within my hand; I turned it here, I turned it there. Black it was without, and dark within. I *could not* understand.

. . . . . .

A woman stood beside my bed. Soft-voiced she was, and sweet of face. "Nay," she said, "it is not black nor dark within, but of the purest gold."

I thought her mad.

Once more she spoke, "There is a way, but only one; take it, and understand."

"This way," I asked, "whither leads it, and its name?"

"It leads," she said, "to Freedom, and its name is Silent Prayer."

I held her with astonished gaze.

Then loud I laughed and long. It was so very droll! Despair sat by my side; Death reached out cold white arms. Pray! I had prayed while the days passed into weeks, full-laden with the burden of their tears. I had prayed while those weeks merged slowly into months of that unholy calm which is the devil's rhapsody—when the eyes are dry and the lips are still, save that perchance they twitch into a smile at the sight of another's tears. Kind fools! to weep in pity, when the bleeding heart, its passion spent, and the tortured limbs, all tempest-torn, are one in their voiceless pain! Blind fools! to weep in pity for that which passeth tears! . . . I had prayed whilst from out the womb of that Satanic calm dropped forth the still-born years. Ah me! that laboured lingering

birth with its foul fruitage all of woe! Ah me! those hopeless, helpless, endless years! I marvelled when men called them living, for *I* knew them to be dead. The devil's horrid counterfeit of life, they lay behind me and before, a ghastly throng; they mocked me where they lay; the face of each defaced, the form of each defiled, by the cruel hand of a dread monotony. . . . I had prayed whilst the nights of hell's own revelry gave hideous promise of eternal woe, and thus —the end! Pray? oh! my mirth, it shook me merrily! Pray? to understand a thing like this?

Once more the answer came, "It is the only way." And thus she left me.

That day, Death held his face to mine, and promised me deep sleep and rest from pain. Almost, I let his lips rest on my own. But Doubt sprang up and shouted in my ear; "How know you that his promise is not vain? There is a life beyond!"

Again Death whispered to my heart, but now, I knew he mocked my need, though I knew not how I knew it. Methought I heard hell's laughter, so soft! so low! and yet, though soft, too subtle to be sweet. I turned me in my chains, and as I turned, a little child climbed on my bed, and wound soft arms about my neck. So small she was and weak, she held me back. Perforce, I prayed once more. But first, I placed my finger on my lips, and thus I raised my heart to God.

And lo! within mine hand, beneath mine eye, I found a thing of gold. Its very shape had changed! A key, it seemed to be, of strange device and strength most rare. And right within its heart, behold, a pearl! and deeply graved upon that pearl, these words; "This is the key: unlock the 'Word.' Search deep

within its very soul; find there, and *keep*, that all-inclusive gift of God to man—the Truth."

I placed the key within the lock. Slowly at first, then quickly, and more quickly yet it turned.

Now stilled with wonder, now rent by doubt; anon, borne upward by the might of Hope—so strong of wing and eagle-eyed—I searched; I found; through all eternity I *keep*—the Truth.

Through all eternity I thank my God who gave the Truth to me. I thank that child of God, that brave New England woman, who, by the grace of God, has wrought a key so fine and strong, that it has opened wide the Word of God, and thrown upon the sacred page the clear white light of love divine.

We, who try to follow, guess a little what it must have cost to make that key of purest gold. We know, though only something, of the fire through which she must have passed, when throwing the searchlight of this revelation upon the darkened thought of ages. And knowing, though so little, we yet thank God Almighty for her patience and her love.

. . . . .

And thus it was, that the white-winged angel Hope first came to me, and waked my slumbering soul from lethargy to life: while her gentle sister, Faith, so soft of tread, so still of voice, stood by my side, and pointed to the Light, till their beauteous mother, Love—the greatest of the three—holding a hand of each, bent over me and pressed upon my weary brow—the kiss of peace.

And now, together, they pointed to the Light. And within the Light, I saw a crown, and upon that crown a great word written—a word so high, and broad, and

long, and deep, that I could not read its name aright. But as I tried, and tried again, the days rose up and clapped their hands, then bid me merrily, Adieu. For the weeks were there in joyous mood. But scarcely had *they* smiled upon my path than the gladsome months were with me. And then—I lost all count of time, for its day was done, and it meekly bowed before a far-off glimmer of Eternity: for I had learned to read that word aright, though still I knew not all its depth. No mortal may know *that;* for the measure of that word is All Eternity. But even now much may be known; for even here, the mortal may begin to put on Immortality. And as my life is filled with gratitude, my heart sends forth a long, full note of praise, and I bow more low than I ever dreamed that I could bow, and yet! not low enough. For as my hope soars higher than I ever dreamed a human hope could soar, my life is shaken by a mighty sound, sublime and wonderful! Surging about my onward path, it sweeps a matter-world away and throws a chastened suppliant at the feet of Mind. Prostrate I lay, till I, my pride rebuked, learned a great lesson of Eternity—that Hope, to be true Hope, must first be shorn of mad ambition's earthy wings, ere it may wear the vesture of humility and rise on pinions all divine. Now my whole being bows before the Majesty of God; and once again, more clearly than before, I hear that mighty sound—surely an impartation of an endless harmony! And lo! embraced within that glorious song, yet ever individual, I hear that same full note of praise; but fuller, stronger, purer than before. Now holy awe lays chastening hand upon my head, as I whisper to my heart, "Can this thing be? May man, while yet on earth, make

one with that sweet choir above?" For answer, I swiftly search the "little book" within my hand, and there I read of Man, the work of God. Man! as he *is*, as he always *has been*, and *as he ever more shall be*,—the perfect offspring of the only Mind. Now, as I read and read again, lo! far and wide throughout the vastness of Infinity, I see that "Fourth" for which a matter-world has searched in vain. And as I look and look again, I hear a voice as the voice of many angels say, "Come unto me and live." Hearing, I must needs obey, and thus perpetual peace is mine, for one by one the fetters fall away. And now, with steadfast glance upheld, I see Man roam—strong, free, new-born—amid the height and depth, the breadth, the length, the wealth of Mind. Upon Purity's white pinions, far outspread and all begleamed with light, he rises, ever rises, from sense to Soul, till lo! he stands revealed—the image and the likeness of his God! And thus I see Man live forever, individualised in infinite variety, high-poised within the Eternal Three, upheld by the Almighty power of that Immortal "Fourth"—

AT ONE WITH GOOD.

Part I

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

OR

TANGLED THREADS IN THE HAND OF MAN

All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances.

—Shakespeare.

CHAPTER I

MIST

What is life? 'Tis but a madness.
What is life? A mere illusion,
Fleeting pleasure, fond delusion,
Short-lived joy that ends in sadness,
Whose most constant substance seems
But the dream of other dreams.
—*Calderon.*

Most of the room was in shadow, but the carefully arranged blind permitted a strong light to rest upon the couch whereon lay, at full length, a young man.

Another man, in regulation frock-coat of sombre hue, sat before his desk, moving nothing but his right hand. With firmly held pen he made notes in a dreary folio before him.

Suddenly, the stillness was broken. Very quietly, the recumbent man asked a momentous question.

"How long have I to live?"

Sir James Norton placed his pen across the rack with some deliberation. He was a little taken aback by the cool delivery of the unexpected query; and it was not until his trained eye detected a certain hardness in his patient's look, that he realised how completely the sick man understood the situation.

"It is clearly impossible to speak with certainty upon such a matter," he replied gently; "we must hope for the best. You are a young man, and of course that is in your favour."

The Duke looked steadily into the doctor's face. "How long have I to live?" He repeated the words calmly, though a little wearily.

"I cannot say," the doctor answered, with the faintest touch of asperity in his tone. Then, compelled by the steadiness of the quiet gaze fixed upon him, he added: "Of course all excitement must be avoided, for another attack of hemorrhage like the last might be very weakening to the system."

"Thanks!"

The young man rose and stood for a moment deep in thought.

Then he returned the prescription which Sir James had just handed him, gently remarking, "For many years I have taken much medicine; on the whole, I think I will not take any more;" and the hardness of the mouth relaxed a little, for the Duke was smiling.

At the street door he turned and said, with the gentle courtesy which always endeared him to those with whom he came in touch, "I am grateful for your attentive care of my case—very grateful to you for arranging the consultation here to-day. As you know, I am anxious about my wife. She gains strength very slowly and we try to spare her as much as possible, for to-morrow we go North,—our little son is to be christened this week."

A minute later Sir James re-entered his consulting room. He stood for a moment thinking deeply, then he tore his rejected prescription neatly in half and, with a manner still preoccupied, consigned it to the waste-paper basket.

No one knew better than the celebrated physician that drugs were entirely useless in such a case as this;

but, of course, he must follow the usual routine and send his patient from stethoscope to pharmacy. And here a thought, long dormant, woke to vigorous action and fretted the doctor's rather weary brain; unconsciously, but none the less deliberately, he turned his back upon the thought. It grew in strength and faced him. This time he ordered it away. But the thought had made its home with him too long and now became importunate. When had it entered, unrecognised, into his mind? Futile question! Perhaps in boyhood's day, when, Homer in hand, he had sought the assistance of his Liddell and Scott. Unconsciously impelled by the worrying thought, he now turned to his bookshelves and took down his old-time companion which had rested there undisturbed for many years. Soon he found that which he, half protestingly, sought.

"Φάρμακου," (Pharmakon); "a *drug*, whether healing or noxious." Then, in Homer, "*a healing remedy, medicine*" generally applied outwardly. Next, in the later classics, "an enchanted potion, spell, incantation." Next, "*a poison* (as Shakespeare uses *drug*)."

Turning to the derivatives he found:—"φαρμακεία," (pharmakeia); "*the using of medicine*," "*pharmacy.*" Generally, "*the use of any kind of drugs, potions, spells, &c.;*" also "*poisoning*" and "*witchcraft.*"

Again, "φαρμακεύς," (pharmakeus), "*a poisoner, sorcerer;*" and, in later Greek, "*a druggist apothecary.*"

The philological connection between the original Greek and the various English derivatives was obvious.

Sir James Norton was a religious man and knew

his Bible well. He read it more often than any other book—works on materia medica excepted. The beauty of the Old Testament phraseology especially appealed to his love of euphony, and he constantly read it for the mere pleasure of indulging his poetical sense. Now thought played upon the words which he had just studied and reminded him that recourse to such agencies is repeatedly forbidden in the Bible. The matter worried him. He had tried all his life to obey the teaching of his orthodox religion, but of late he had become more and more dissatisfied, as he noted one self-evident inconsistency therein after another. Now he shut the Greek Lexicon with an impatient gesture and sighed as he returned it to its place.

Throwing himself heavily into an armchair, he gazed discontentedly around his consulting room. Those four walls had looked upon much that was not pleasant. To-day, an atmosphere of gloom seemed to emanate unrelieved from the sad brown of their distemper. There were times, and this was one of them, when the whole room became unbearable to Sir James, for it seemed to whisper to him of women's tears and of men's white-faced sorrow.

Upon that sofa had lain a world-worn gambler.

"Give up the cards"—and the man had laughed—"for the sake of my wife and child! Why, doctor, the wife is dead, and I am glad, for she was often hungry here; and the girl—the girl is worse than dead, and I am glad; for she was often hungry, too! Give up the cards! Why, man! you know that I *cannot!*"

Leaning against that mantelshelf, the weary-faced boy—too weary to laugh—had said, "Doctor! of

course I will go abroad if you wish it; where the sun shines and the sky is blue!" and then coughing, he had stained his handkerchief red. "Why not? There are wine and women everywhere; *and . . . the money will last the year!*"

There had sat a wailing woman, repentant, *because* in pain.

"Doctor," she had cried, "tell me that the child will not inherit this awful craving. I had rather that it should die unborn!" Upon that same chair had sat, years later, that same woman's child, and she, in her turn, had wailed, "Doctor, you know that I cannot help it! You know *that the thing is inherited.*"

And hearing, Sir James had remembered. He must, he thought, have drunk in with his mother's milk the knowledge of "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

But why, my brother, stop there? Go on; and remember the glorious promise which awaits every child of man, who elects to rise above the thraldom of the flesh and learns to *love,* thus ceasing to hate. Is it not also written, "and showing mercy unto thousands of them that *love me* and keep my commandments"? Nay, more! Is it not further written, "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the *children's* teeth are set on edge. As I live, saith the Lord God, *ye shall not have occasion* any more to use this proverb in Israel."

To-day the great London physician realised that for years, while longing to help, he had yet stood

helpless by, unable to cure man's sickness, because he could not make man cease from sin; and, as he ruminated upon his life of unavailing toil, a tired look stole over Sir James' sensitive face.

"How seldom have I *cured!*" he exclaimed; "how seldom have I done more than alleviate!"

Almost passionately he muttered; "I'm weary of this. For thirty years to battle with disease! for thirty years to think, to work, and even to pray, as I have done—as hundreds of other men have done—and to get no further! To find no certainty anywhere; nothing but vague hypotheses; and always in the end—death!"

Aye, doctor; for thirty years to battle, to think, to work, and even to pray! And for your honest effort, to receive much money and more fame, but always the heartache which is interlinked with the secret conviction of failure! Pause, Doctor, a moment and listen to an echo from the past:—

"One thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that good part."

"There is a spirit in man: and *the inspiration of the Almighty* giveth them understanding."

CHAPTER II

SHADOW-LAND

Tell me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream.
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.
—*Longfellow.*

While Sir James Norton thus soliloquised, his distinguished patient drove further westward. With eyes half closed, he lay back upon the soft leather which cushioned his brougham, and that great impressionist —man's imagination—dashed a vivid picture upon the canvas of his mind.

There he saw the interior of a beautiful chapel. Strong shafts of light, richly dyed, threw their radiance upon the central figures of a stately group. A background of oak, carved by the hand of a master craftsman and deeply empurpled by age, formed a regal setting for the font of cloud-white marble which shone forth softly as might the purest pearl. Almost lost to sight within the lawn-draped arms of episcopalian dignity lay a little child. Gathered around were men and women of high degree. There stood a royal princess, and next to her he saw his wife. . . . Here fear caught the man about the heart, and bade him give pause and observe that, with the ripening of her motherhood, his wife's loveliness bespoke the pale

beauty of the snowdrop, rather than, as heretofore, the straightness and strength of the lily. . . . And his it was to tell her that the little babe, his child and hers, must, while still a child, bear the full weight of a great inheritance. God grant that he be not compelled to carry also the burden of his race's woe!

The weary man's eyes are now quite closed. Worn out with the morning's demands upon his strength, he sleeps. And as he sleeps, the glitter and the roar of Babylon, softened and beautified out of all similitude, penetrate his dreams: he stands, a spectator, forming an item in a crowd of rank and wealth. Flowers riot in beauteous profusion: tall palms and graceful ferns lend their aid to a scene of almost oriental splendour; here, cloudy lace and shimmering satin, and, upon every side, the flash of gems. In the midst he sees himself. There he walks, with the light of love in his eyes and the glow of possession upon his brow. His bride, with sweet eyes downcast and cheeks softly flushed with the heritage of Eve, moves by his side. Happy faces flank them upon the right and left. And now, the great organ speaks: from vaulted arch to beautiful mosaic, from reredos to western door, the vast cathedral fills with wave upon wave of grandest harmony. Now comes the triumphant march of inspired chords; now upswell the ringing sounds of revelry, pealing forth upon their joyous way, as do merry marriage bells. . . . But hark! the organ's mighty heart is broken; it throbs with piteous pain. Wail upon wail rends its stricken way out upon the solemn stillness, which holds the dreamer motionless. . . . For see! flowers white and beautiful, but in a funeral pile. Changed is the splendid pageant: for

mortal love has failed to bar the way, and Death is King! Gone are the lightsome faces: all faded is the gay attire: all lustreless the erstwhile sparkling gems! The men and the women are there, but each clad in a panoply of deepest woe. He sees the bier! He sees the darksome pall which drapes its form! and notes the signs of ancient heraldry. . . . And well he knows for whom the mourners weep. Each voice is mute: no whisper moves upon the air: and yet!—four words of solemn import smite upon the dreamer's heart:—The Duke is dead.

CHAPTER III

MENTAL ASSASSINATION

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.
—*John.*

"Look out!"

"Seems to be in a devil of a hurry, whoever he may be;" and the speaker stepped hastily back among the heather, as a motor flashed past making light of bye-laws and police regulations.

"That is Lord George Maxwell," his companion answered. "He has no doubt been to the little heir's christening. They have evidently made a great day of it up at the Castle. Why are you not there?"

Mr. Campbell looked with some interest after the swiftly disappearing motor. He knew the Duke of Westmoreland well and had, moreover, heard the village talk, which said that Lord George Maxwell would soon be owner of the moors for miles around.

"I don't care for functions," he answered shortly. Then turning abruptly to his companion he added, "How is the Duke? Is he really so ill—and the child too?"

"The Duke is dying," was the terse reply; "—and the child also."

"But, Doctor"—and the young man's voice was full of protest—"I have heard that said of the Duke before; I heard it said when I was fishing in these parts three years ago. But I have met him often since then and I see no marked change in him."

"Oh, I know report has killed him off more than once somewhat prematurely, but this time it's true. I have known the Duke's family for two generations, and my only wonder is that this man should have lived so long;" and Doctor Weldon shouldered his rod and turned to follow a path which ran across the moors in the direction of the village.

"Well, I knew him at Eton, and he was strong enough then," his companion answered in an irritated tone. The fact was, James Campbell both hated and resented the thought of death, and it seemed all wrong to him that a young man, standing upon the threshold of what might have developed into a great career, should thus drop out of his place in the world before his work in life was well begun.

"He *was* remarkably strong as a lad, but he was doomed before his birth, you know," and the doctor sighed.

"Horrid theory, that of heredity," Mr. Campbell answered roughly. "Doesn't seem to me to give a man half a chance!"

"No, it doesn't," agreed Doctor Weldon, "but unfortunately it is more than a theory. The Duke is the only survivor of four brothers anyway. Everyone knew that the disease must manifest itself sooner or later in him."

"Well, good-bye; hope we'll have better sport to-morrow. This basket is twice too light to please me!" James Campbell turned rather abruptly away and walked quickly along the road, the swing of conscious strength lending ease and grace to his stride. He was deeply depressed by Dr. Weldon's view of the Duke's condition, for the wealthy nobleman and the

dour young Scot were fast friends and had been so for years.

"So he really is dying this time, it seems! There is a mistake somewhere," he muttered. "Men like Westmoreland—good fellow that he is—ought not to die at the age of twenty-five. I wish one knew more about it all. Somehow, I resent being so much in the dark. Why don't the ministers tell us more?" Mr. Campbell gave the strap across his shoulders a dissatisfied jerk, as he turned into the inn at which he spent a summer month in every few years; for though warmly welcomed at the Castle, it suited his independent habits better to be entirely his own master at the village inn.

. . . . . .

As the Castle gates clanged to behind Lord George Maxwell's motor, an old man, wearing the ducal livery, shook his head despondently as he shot the great bolt back to its place.

"I'm afeared as how we'll be a-having *him* a-duking it here afore long!" he remarked to the young huntsman who stood watching the swirling dust raised by the rush of steel along summer roads.

"What! His Lordship! Do you mean it? Is his Grace that bad?" And the young fellow's face grew grave; for the reigning Duke was dear to his sportsman's heart. True, it was long since his Grace had appeared in pink, but when he had done so man and horse moved as one and led the way bravely across broad meadow and rusty hedgerow.

"Aye, he's a-dying," curtly rejoined Mr. Barker; "he's been a-dying these many months, but now—well, I'm afeared it'll be from wedding white to funeral

black, afore the year's out. The old Dowager, she buried all his brothers, afore they could walk a'most, and the little Lord Gerald, as he then was, is the only one as she managed to breech!"

"Seems sad, it do," remarked Williams dully. "I've heard my father say he was as fine a little 'un as you could wish, and *that* well plucked, you could set him on anything at ten-year-old. But they do say as how consumption's sure to take 'em all off in this family, soon or late."

"Aye, and the little Marquis, he's but a weakling. Them London doctors think very bad of him, I heard 'em say in the hall last night."

With these gloomy prognostications the two men parted; Mr. Barker to tell his "old missus" that he thought the time had come for a pension, as he'd no fancy for Lord George as *his* master; while Williams spent the next hour talking of the beginning of his own life and the end of his master's, the second housemaid meanwhile bearing him willing company.

. . . . . .

Lord George Maxwell sat perfectly still as his car carried him homeward, racing its way across the country. He had just seen that which made him thoughtful, and he had that awaiting him at his journey's end which made him more thoughtful still.

"Curse it!" he breathed between tightly closed lips, "I almost wish the positions were reversed. I shall have my work cut out to get through with a clean face;"—his hands he knew to be hopelessly soiled. "Damn those sharks! It's all their fault for netting me in my teens."

Some years before the day of which I now write, Lord George Maxwell had commenced his Oxford career already encumbered with debt. The snowball of liabilities had started to roll even before he had entered the sixth at Eaton, and had continued upon its unsavoury way, gathering solidity and momentum as the years passed on. At first the young nobleman, whose diplomatic duties had kept him much out of England, had wondered at the alacrity with which the money lenders had met his wishes, by making substantial advances in exchange for what he knew to be but poor security. Later, he understood. Even now, he hated to think of that day. Half unconsciously, he dated his further moral deterioration from that memorable Twelfth. The young Duke of Westmoreland had been paying one of his rare visits to England, and at the house of a mutual friend, uncle and nephew had met for the first time since the latter's boyhood. It was upon this occasion that Lord George had suddenly realised that his creditors must have been trading for years upon information, new to him but easily obtainable now by one glance at the Duke's white face and shrunken form. Swayed by a strong revulsion of feeling, the elder man had sworn to wean himself from turf and table, but in vain. With him gambling had become a fixed habit, and all other amusements were dreary in comparison; moreover it became increasingly easy, he found, to raise money, until quite unexpectedly the delicate young Duke married. Immediately Lord George Maxwell's chief creditors became importunate in their demands for payment, where, before, they had been pressing in their offers of assistance.

The car had barely drawn up before its occupant

leaped out and entered his house, the rough stone portico of which told the stranger here was one of England's ancient homesteads.

"Has Mr. Lethbridge arrived?" he asked curtly.

"Yes, my Lord, he is on the lawn;" and the footman opened the garden door and held it back.

But Lord George Maxwell was in a state of great nervous excitement and was in no hurry to meet his guest. He was therefore relieved to hear the dressing-gong sound at that moment, and walked straight up to his room. He met Mr. Lethbridge half an hour later in the hall, and they maintained a superficial conversation during dinner. The meal over, Lord George immediately led the way into the library. Both men were now smoking and, for a time, neither made any attempt to speak. Suddenly, however, Mr. Lethbridge rose from his chair and, opening the door sharply, looked out into the hall; closing it he returned to his seat.

"No one there now, at any rate," he remarked, "but I like to be sure before discussing these personal matters."

His host did not reply and after awhile Mr. Lethbridge continued, "You are sure it really is all over this time?" and he laughed softly; "fact is," he added, "his Grace has been altogether too long about making his exit to suit my book."

Lord George winced. What a brute this refined-looking, soft-mannered man was in reality, and how he hated him! With a sort of wonder, he reflected upon the fast friendship which had once existed between them.

"I am sure," he answered dryly.

"He was pretty bad some time ago," Mr. Lethbridge remarked, "but he has lived long enough to marry and to perpetuate the race, you see."

"To marry, but not to perpetuate the race; the child's life isn't worth a cent, and the Dukedom is as good as mine. You may safely back that bill, it's only a matter of a few weeks now!" Lord George spoke sharply, for he hated the whole transaction and wished to be done with it quickly.

"I believe it is, and so I will help you round this nasty corner: it's about touch and go with you, eh! old chap? And when you *are* reigning at Knaresdale, why, I will not forget to look you up!" and again Mr. Lethbridge laughed gently, as he put his name to the bill in front of him, but still rested his strong slender fingers upon it.

"Now," he continued, "please sign *this!*"

"I'm damned if I do!" and Lord George seized the paper which the other man had placed before him, and tore it across and across.

Once more Mr. Lethbridge laughed in his exasperating manner. Nothing ever angered him: he was known to have the coolest head and the steadiest hand among his set.

"My dear chap, don't make a scene; it's too hot."

"I'll never sign that!" and Lord George Maxwell struck his chair with the flat of his hand. "The condition is unheard of! There are some things that a gentleman may not do!"

"There are many things that a gentleman may not do! but—I have seen them done!"

Mr. Lethbridge spoke quietly as ever, but his voice

held a note of inflexibility, which the other had heard before and had reason to recognise as final.

Lord George rose and striding to the French window flung it roughly open. A look, not good to see, settled in his eyes and, when five minutes later he turned and walked slowly up to his companion, his face was white enough to startle even Frank Lethbridge. For a time the man was silent, though twice he essayed to speak; then passionate words of miserable self-surrender rushed from between his teeth.

"Damn you, Lethbridge! I would to God I had never seen your face. Give me the cursed thing and let me sell my soul as soon as may be!"

Mr. Lethbridge selected a sheet of Lord George's crested notepaper from a basket upon the writing-table, and carefully, with deliberate slowness, he wrote a few lines upon it, but, when a minute later two insignificant-looking pieces of paper changed hands, his usually expressionless face changed a little, for he had managed the business beautifully. It had required much patience, more judgment, but the work was well done; more thoroughly indeed than the poor fool before him yet realised. Time enough for him, Frank Lethbridge, to show his hand ungloved, when he fulfilled his promise and looked his lordship up at Knaresdale—and not long to wait now, he knew, for he too had seen the Duke of late and had looked at him with the critical eye of "waiting man."

"Well, the sooner the better," and Mr. Lethbridge held out his hand to his host as he bade him good-night. He smiled again at his companion's childish discourtesy in ignoring the conventional salute.

Left alone, Lord George remained for hours in the library, and it was not until early morning that he rose from his chair and sought his bedroom.

What had he done? Signed away the honour of a woman who had once loved and trusted him? Well! Such things had been done before and would be done again. Poverty was apt to drive both men and women to hell!

So let both men and their vile schemes pass from our minds, even as they leave the pages of this book. Merely introduced to uncover a danger that has been too long ignored, they have done their work; and those who follow this history will note that in the great battle between good and evil, the powers of darkness cannot finally prevail against the children of the Light.

CHAPTER IV

THE MESMERISM OF FEAR; OR, "THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW"

The Great and angry deep;—
Chasms black and awful!
Moving mountains, strong, relentless, terrible,
Cruel-capped with deathly white!
A rushing mighty wind—
The roar of hell gone mad;
The gleeful shriek of fiends let loose!
Death-dealing swords of flame, fiercely
Darting through the night:
The guns of Satan booming loud and long;
And overhead a canopy of deepest gloom.

. . . . .

From high heaven comes a voice "Peace be still!"
Softly, lovingly breathes the voice,
Gently gleams a golden light,
And Satan's host hath fled.
The great deep smiles like a child at rest;
The heavens reflect the glory of God,
And kiss the wavelets with the light of Love;
And there is a great calm.
The Spirit of God, mighty, serene, most wonderful,
Moves upon the face of the waters;
And Love Omnipotent reigneth.

At the same hour as that at which Lord George Maxwell and Mr. Lethbridge parted for the night, the Duke of Westmoreland rose from the long couch, upon which he rested often now, and walked down the corridor by his wife's side. Before he opened the further door, he turned and drew her within his arm.

"Beloved," he said, "the day has been long for us both, but I have still much to do, so I will not disturb your rest, but will go to my own room later;" and he raised her face to his and gently kissed it.

"Dearest, must you write again to-night?" she asked; "what is it that keeps you so busy?"

For answer he passed his lips across her cheek and brow, till she, framing his face within soft palms, held him still and lightly pressed her kisses upon his lips.

"My love," the Duke spoke softly, "I have many things to put in order, and—time is passing."

Not hearing the grave warning which he thus tried to give, lightly and lovingly she laughed her sweet reply; "Then, husband and lover, good-night." As she withdrew her form from his lingering embrace, a great tenderness expressed itself in his low whisper of love which breathed its gentle way among the gold of her hair and softly touched the bloom of her cheek, till her own love bade it pause and rest silently within the sanctuary of a pure wife's heart.

At the head of the marble stairs, the Duchess turned and rounding each delicate finger tip, the one upon the other, she formed a rosy chalice and prisoned therein a kiss. Bending a glance from love-lit eyes upon the man who watched her from below, she threw her kiss upon the air, thus bidding him once more her sweet good-night.

He caught her kiss upon bravely smiling lips, but a sudden dew shone in his eyes as he slowly reached the topmost stair and wound his arms about her.

And even as heart beat upon heart, Death warned him of its near approach and shortened the breath with which he would have bade his wife farewell.

The Duke rose restlessly from his writing-table and walked out through the open door on to the battlements. Built many centuries ago, the Castle stood at the head of a wild glen, overlooking a little hamlet which nestled in the valley below. From this vantage point, many of the Duke's broad lands were visible, and to-night he realised more clearly than ever before the greatness of his possessions. Purple moors stretched around him upon every side. Bordered on the westward by the sea, there to the eastward by the heights of Skaw, and before him, as far as the eye could reach, by the winding silver ribbon within whose shining folds the salmon hid: it was a goodly heritage.

At the moment the night was made beautiful by reason of the moon's clear light, but clouds were moving up and betokened the approach of a time of tumult among the elements.

For some minutes the sick man stood still with his hands loosely clasped behind his back: presently, the nervous fingers tightened their hold upon each other, and he raised his white face, while he asked unanswerable questions of the quiet night.

"Rank, and lands, and wealth," he muttered, "I have always had, but the love is new and sweet. I would to God that I could keep it. Why may I not? Why have I been crowned with the joy of love, only to be dethroned by the hand of Death? Of what use is all this"—and he swept his arm out and around with a passionate gesture—"of what use to a dead man?"

And now the Duke paced slowly up and down upon the battlements. "How long and how useless has been my search for health!" he cried aloud. "I have sought

it upon the Mediterranean shore; I have pined for it all along the Riviera; I have hoped and prayed for it among the suns and snows of Davos. I have sailed weary miles across the ocean, even to the Antipodes; I have endured unnatural temperatures between four walls; I have encamped upon the African veld; always seeking, but never finding health. Like a foolish traveller, I have chased a will-o'-the-wisp which, bright and beautiful, seemed constantly to be almost within my grasp, but which always mocked me in the end as it faded from my sight."

The fevered man dropped his head upon his breast and let both arms hang inert by his side. Then, like a hunted creature, he turned suddenly and, entering the Castle, sped his steps from room to room, out into the gallery, down the central stairs, onward through the corridor and drawing-rooms, across the great hall, only pausing when he reached the doors which gave entrance to the state-rooms. These he entered and paced their length again and again. And now hot words rush from between the fevered lips, impelled by the volcanic thought which gives them birth. Why had he fled thus madly into these great rooms? How dreary they seem in their set grandeur and their wrappings of chintz: how dead and white they look bathed in the moon's cold light! And what is this he sees? A black frock coat; a keen and clever face! And that other man, young, drawn up to his full height, receiving with befitting calm his death warrant! Death, and after? Some had preached to him of purgatory; some had coldly said, "annihilation"; some—most sure that they themselves were saved—had thundered of "hell-fire"; others had lulled his sense to sleep by gentle

murmurs of "Elysian rest"; and others,—oh, their name was legion! All held the other wrong, themselves alone were right! *Not one could give a reason for the faith within him! Not one could prove the substance of his words. Women* sometimes talked of "love beyond the grave," but they were women only, sweet and good, but most unreasonable.

Thus, doubt and fear, twin brethren of the flesh, assail him, and for a while they hold him mute: then a sound presses its way between the man's white lips. Falling harshly upon the still night air, it wails its length onwards through lofty hall and empty corridor, dying at last because unfit to live—the cry of a broken heart, the child of doubt and fear.

. . . . .

That midsummer night was long remembered in the vale of the Hesk, for such destruction had never before been seen there in the memory of any man then alive.

The storm disturbed the Duchess: first mingling with her dreams and causing her to turn and turn again among the soft down and fine cambric upon which she lay, it finally awakened her to a troubled consciousness, beclouded with the terror of her recent dream.

Swirling sheets of water flung themselves in impotent fury against the strong glaze of the window pane which denied them entrance. The elements, let loose, made mad music as they met and met again, holding wild revelry all through the blackness of the night. To the westward the sea rose up full-crested in its wrath and, marshalling all its forces, formed line upon line of cruel black and white, between whose awful

heights there lay dark depths of hellish treachery; whilst the wind, winding her mighty arms about the giant elm, uplifted it and, tearing it from its home of a hundred years, shrieked gleefully as she threw it all its length upon the sodden earth. Then, dancing on with frantic haste, she parted the mother and the child and laughed to see the birch all bare and white, where bough was rent from parent stem. She laughed again, but this time with a still and noiseless mirth, as, holding in her breath, she made ready to surpass herself in her work of devilish despoliation. The smiling moon now fled aghast, hiding herself behind the canopy of jet-dyed clouds which curtained all the heavens. And the angry storm clapped its hands and boomed with thunderous voice, as it hurled white crystals upon the land and crushed the life from tender summer flowers. The lightning flashed its vivid way, now here, now there, until it met and mastered the chapel spire; then, pleased with the ruin it had wrought, it lit up earth and sky to show its handiwork to men.

. . . . .

At an early hour the next morning every man, woman and child upon the estate knew that the Duke of Westmoreland was dying.

The storm still raged, but busy workmen were already employed in repairing the broken telegraph wires. Meanwhile, the ill news sped rapidly from mouth to mouth, as such news does, losing nothing upon its journey, and before noon the Duke was reported dead.

It was almost night; the hours had come and gone, and still the Duke lived. Sir James Norton had arrived from London, and the Duchess had left him in consultation with Dr. Weldon. Now, as the two men

entered the room, she rose from her chair and remained standing while they approached her. Immediately she read that in their grave faces which rendered question upon her part unnecessary.

"Your Grace," Sir James Norton's voice was quiet and dragged a little, but it nevertheless sounded cruelly distinct, "I thought it right to warn the Duke some days ago that he must avoid all excitement, for I knew that his reserve of strength was not sufficient to enable him to rally from——"

"Stop!" and the Duchess raised her hand with a gesture more peremptory than she dreamed of. "I understand," she continued gently, "you can give me no hope."

With a bluntness born partly of the pain that he felt and partly of his country life, Dr. Weldon joined his voice to that of his London *confrère*.

"There is no hope," he said; and his tone was roughened by the remembrance of that which he had left upstairs.

The stricken lady never moved, but stood before them straight and tall. So still she stood that both men marvelled. Had she heard aright? Had she really understood?

But the whiteness of her face and the slight tremor of her under lip told something of her silent woe. At last she spoke.

"I thank you both, I shall not leave the Duke again."

And she bent her head with gentle courtesy and even smiled a little, as she passed both men at the open door.

The minutes only had come and gone, when a swift-

winged message left the Duke's private office and within the hour arrived at its destination—a small London house.

Leaving the office, the Duchess passed swiftly upstairs. Reaching her husband's room, she stood for a moment framed within the arched doorway.

A dark shade softened the glare of the lamp. It kept the dying man in shadow but allowed a beam of light to rest athwart the entrance to the room. As the watching lady stood upon the threshold, her white gown shimmered softly and the bright gold of her hair gleamed amid the semi-darkness of the lofty room. Her face was grave and very still, but in her eyes there shone the light of hope.

The nurse advanced from her post beside the sick man's bed. With a silent gesture the Duchess waved her aside and, as the woman passed her, issued a quiet command, "Leave me, I will watch alone."

Advancing, she knelt beside the bed and, folding her husband's hand within her own, spoke in a voice which, though low, was very clear.

"Can you hear me, Gerald? I have telegraphed to Mr. Meade."

The sick man opened his eyes and smiled gently.

"My white lily," he whispered, "nothing can help me now."

"Gerald, these people do get wonderful answers to their prayers after others have failed, I know; try to hope that you will recover."

The sick man did not answer, except to hold, with what firmness he might, his wife's cool hand. But his thought rose and fell, strangely disturbed by this

suggestion of life, when even now he seemed to hear the measured footfall of his inexorable enemy, Death.

Presently . . . all thought stood still, held and bound by the power of a woman's voice.

Clearly he heard the words she uttered, and eagerly he drank their meaning in, for they were words of Love and Life—words of longing and of trustful, hopeful prayer.

. . . . .

It was the hour of dawn. The great storm, its wild passion spent, sank wearily to rest. Westward, all was calm and clear, for the raging billows had rolled away, and the mighty deep lay still, save where it caressed the shore with a murmurous song of pure delight. The heavens, now radiant with a golden gleam, showered their wealth of summer glory far and wide. Sweet songs of love and life thrilled out upon the air, as the lark spread strong wing and mounted higher, ever higher, in its flight from earth to sky. And now, with imperial might, the sun held sway over all the land, waking to newness of joy the rain-soaked earth and warming to vigorous action the myriad heart-beats of the moorland life.

Within the Castle scarcely a sound was heard. With noiseless tread the nurse approached the doctor, as he was about to enter the sick man's room.

"His Grace," she whispered, "has slept all night, I should have called you otherwise."

For a moment the doctor paused in mute surprise; then he resumed his way. Upon the threshold of the chamber he found himself arrested by something which he could neither define nor understand. The blackness

of his coat failed to capture one ray of light; conspicuous, by force of contrast, was the keen face and strong white hand which held back the heavy curtain.

The Duke was sleeping restfully as does a happy child. Looking more closely at him, Sir James Norton saw that all nervous tension had relaxed. The sick man was evidently destined to pass peacefully away, and he thanked God that it was so, for he had not expected the end to be so calm. And the Duchess looked strangely happy! Though awake, she appeared to rest most perfectly in the low chair placed beside the bed.

Just then she turned and saw the doctor standing by the door; smilingly she placed her fingers upon her lips.

The man stood dazed; then, impelled by that which he felt but still could not define, he turned and left the room.

What! ye wondering world. . . . Has a *thought* so much of power? Does Life, in very truth, command? Must Death indeed obey?

The Duchess rose and drew the curtains back, then opened wide the lattice panes. Through the high casement the sun gleamed in and threw his warm smile upon the bed, filling the room with glowing light.

And hark! Whence comes this song of joyous triumph, rising, swelling, soaring upon the morning air? Or is it a still, small voice, whispering within a woman's heart the answer to that woman's prayer?

"I am the way, the truth and the life;" "Follow me." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

CHAPTER V

THE UNBURIED DEAD; OR, "THE FRUIT OF HIS BODY FOR THE SIN OF HIS SOUL"

Truth is as impossible to be soiled by any outward touch as the sunbeam.

—*Milton.*

During the following winter there was a period of intense cold, which will be long remembered by those whose hand held no weapon wherewith to fight the grim enemy. For the devil, Want, works not alone but gathers round him, as he penetrates each noisome den, a triad of arch-fiends, even that foul triplet, Sin, Disease and Death—all children of the common parent Fear; all conceived in the womb of that great illusion whom mortal men call Evil; all brought forth by the power of—a lie!

Within a short distance of one of England's oldest towns, there stands a grey stone building, well known for miles around as the dwelling of the St. Anselm Fathers.

On the eve of the New Year, in one of the smaller rooms, a man sat silently before his desk. The hour grew late but still he did not move. Before him lay a sheet of notepaper, its surface quite unmarred by ink. He appeared to be thinking deeply, and upon the strong face signs of a great struggle were visible. His cassock was wrapped around him, and twice he shivered slightly and drew it closer to his form, for

the night was one of bitter frost and the grate was fireless. The whole room looked bare and cold, being severely furnished only with some few necessaries. A skull cap covered the man's head, completely hiding the slight growth of hair which was all that the rules of his order permitted.

Presently he rose and, going to an oaken chest, unlocked it. From within the topmost drawer he drew forth a letter and for a long time rested his eyes upon the few lines which it contained, reading them again and again. Replacing the letter and locking the chest, he crossed the room and threw himself upon his knees beside the bed. Bowing his head upon his folded arms, he remained thus through many hours of the night. As morning dawned he raised his head and rose to the consciousness of another day.

His decision was made for weal or for woe. And now his movements betokened a feverish haste. Rapidly he wrote three lines upon the paper, placed many hours before upon his desk. Not pausing to read them over, he secured the curt message with a seal which hung beneath his vest. Then, reaching a thick cloak from a press beside the bed, he drew it on and, quickly leaving the room, passed out into the wintry air. Looking neither to the right nor left, he made his way with speedy steps into the centre of the town.

Upon the northern side of a mass of grey buildings he stopped and for one half moment his grip tightened upon the missive which he held within the letter box; then suddenly his fingers opened and a look of relief spread over his face, as he heard the rustle of paper touching paper and knew that his decision was now irrevocable.

With a half-stifled sigh he turned upon his homeward way, walking this time with eyes downcast and scarce hastening his footsteps at all: with his right hand he folded his cloak firmly across his breast, while the fingers of his left hand dug deep upon the palm.

Robert Saul was a man of quite unusual height and more spare in form than when he had entered, almost a year ago, upon his term of probation at St. Anslem's College, for it was his temperament to out-Herod Herod, and the oft recurring fast days were apt to find him already fasting. Of a nature strong and passionate, he subdued all personal desire by the exercise of an iron will. Now he felt himself a derelict as he realised that, for the first time in his thinking life, his nature would not answer to the helm.

As he walked homeward he glanced swiftly around. What a world of black and white was this! Spread like a mantle over all the earth as far as eye could reach was the untrodden snow, its crystal surface shining with a beauty only half its own, as it caught and threw back again the luminous glory of the moon's pale light. Splashed upon its purity were blots of inky blackness—dark shadows thrown from each tall and narrow house. Within those doors there were, he knew, contrasts quite as strong but holding a meaning full of pain. Scarcely twelve hours before, he had seen that which had filled his heart with helpless rage—a man, sin-stained and well-nigh mad with drink, and upon the wretched bed, a dying maid, who held across her breast a new-born babe.

Something of the light and shade of life the priest had realised *then*, but it was not until years later that, looking back upon that day, with head raised high

above the mist and thought purified by a selfless love for all humanity, he saw things as they really were. Then he beheld the sin in all its utter blackness, but saw also, there upon that sin-laden bed, a pure young life—white as the Mind from whence it came and all-unspotted by the mortal thought around.

But to-night all was dark to Robert Saul; for he was a man storm-tossed upon the dark and troubled sea of earthly desire. Suddenly he hastened his steps, and reaching the side door by which he had left the college, he entered a long and narrow passage leading to the little room which had so recently been the scene of his mighty struggle between duty and desire. Involuntarily he glanced at the chair before his desk; then turned his eye to the bed upon which the indent of his pressing arms still was visible. There he had knelt and prayed at the parting of the ways for the light which had not come—which could not come to a mind already half made up—prayed to be released from the thraldom of a woman's smile which, by reason of its very purity, drew him to her with resistless force.

Now he summoned a lay brother and sent him to ask for any early interview with the Principal of the College. Much sooner than he had anticipated the summons came, and with mixed feelings Robert Saul hastened to answer it. He found the Father seated before his writing table, a half-written sermon upon the open desk before him.

"Something has come between you and your vow."

The Father did not ask a question, but stated, as a fact, that of which he could have had no certain knowledge.

Slightly disconcerted, Robert Saul merely replied by a brief affirmative.

The Father waited.

Like a child repeating an ill-prepared lesson, his own strong personality seemingly swamped by the masterful mind held over him, the young man haltingly continued. "Yes: my . . . love for a woman."

For quite a moment, the Father did not reply; then, with rigid courtesy he rose from his chair and held out his hand, but he did not look at the man before him as he bade him a curt farewell.

Robert Saul stood amazed; but the Father had already resumed his occupation, and black rapidly grew upon white, as line upon line was traced upon the foolscap by a hand which never paused. For a waiting moment the younger man searched the elder's face, but the clear-cut, emaciated profile might almost have belonged to the dead, so white and still it seemed. No hint was *there* of kindly feeling; no whisper of a living love. The man's deliberate coldness angered Robert Saul. He had armed himself against a display of deep displeasure or, mayhap, against the persuasive eloquence which had first turned his thoughts towards the renunciatory life of an ascetic. Either he could have met; but instead, he found himself dismissed with less than a glance. Keenly pained, but too proud to protest, he turned and left the room.

The interview had occupied barely five minutes, but it had bereft Robert Saul of that upon which he had hitherto leant heavily. Almost had he worshipped this man: almost had he fancied himself beloved by the Father, whose slightest wish had been his law for all the year that lay behind. With cruel suddenness

he had been roused by those words of calm dismissal. Hard and cold as the winter sleet, they had stung him sorely as they fell upon his heart: sharp-edged, they had overshot their mark and cut deeply into the foundations of an unequal friendship—a friendship built upon the shifting sands of human personality.

Now, his most earnest desire was to be gone, as soon as might be, for the whole place spoke to him of wasted energy and bitter disappointment. Hurriedly strapping up his dressing-bag and giving a few necessary directions to the lay brother who attended upon him, he threw a heavy rug across his arm and, without a word of farewell, stepped out into the early dawn and bent his steps toward the station. And as he walked, his thought left the past year and dwelt upon the period of time which had immediately preceded his advent to St. Anslem's—a period during which the whole current of his life had changed.

And the Father? We left him calmly writing, apparently regardless of the turbulent feelings which his decisive words of farewell had aroused in the younger man whom, truth to tell, he loved almost as a son.

As Robert Saul left the room, the Father's still face changed; he appeared to be listening intently. Did he hope that the man, whom he had loved and tutored for so long, would return and give him an opportunity to soften somewhat the harshness of those few words? Nay, the young man's passionate, headstrong nature was too well known to him; and far other thoughts occupied his mind, for he was not living in the present at all.

Suddenly, his face grew old and grey. The beautiful features lost something of their classic lines, and

the whole man broke and swayed, like some sapling at the mercy of a storm. With a weary cry, he flung himself across the table and gripped its sides with all the strength which his thin white hands contained. The outline of his spare form showed hard beneath the cassock which he wore, as it shook with the rending thought within him. Just now, for him, the room was filled with cruel echoes from the past. He looked back twenty years and saw a maiden fair and pure. The autumn glory of crimson and of gold threw glowing colour, with lavish brush, across the background of the picture. Rich browns and burnished yellows bathed her feet, as she stood within the centre of the coppice, and the setting sun washed her robes with rosy light and deepened the flush of love upon her brow. The bright chestnut of her hair rivalled the Indian summer tints that nature painted upon the autumn leaves, and the dark fire of her eyes told plainly of a pride scarce humbled by the greatness of her love.

As though she spoke them now, he heard her words of absolute surrender.

"I can fight no longer, Philip, I am yours. See to it that you keep my honour bright; for the Courcys ever mate with the highest in the land, and I had thought to do likewise. But . . . I can fight no more."

Unable longer to bear these voices from the past, the Father rose and walked with weary gait towards the door. Locking it, he glanced across the room and saw a sight which rushed him headlong back among his restless dead.

Through the uncurtained window he beheld a snow-

bound land, and thought caught and chained him to the memory of a cold white face and haughty brow. From the picture in his mind all light and warmth had fled; for the winter's snows rested upon the coppice now, and the trees stood stark and grim, as though defiant of the fate which stripped them of their summer's joy and left them all unclad before the winter's icy blast.

Grand in the majesty of her righteous wrath, the maiden stood above him, one slender foot pressed upon a gnarled tree root, the other crushed the ivy that clung around its base. Drawn to her full height, thus looking taller than her wont, she spurned his wretched arguments aside.

"I do not understand," she coldly said, "a religion built upon the ashes of a woman's heart! I know naught of any zeal, fed with the wreckage of a woman's life." With proud utterance she checked the protestations he had ready. "Nay!"—and the winter sunshine was not colder than her smile—"Nay! spare me more I pray; the choice has been your own, not mine, from first to last. I have loved you even better than my ancient name, enough to wed you, all unknown though you be. But now"—again that fleeting wintry gleam shot from her eyes, but left her lips unmoved—"I love my honour best of all."

With head held high and arm out-thrown, she pointed him upon his way.

"Leave me," she commanded, "go to your priestly cell and learn there, that to love the God you have not seen you first must lose yourself and learn to love your brother more."

Then, suddenly, her head drooped low upon her

breast; with fingers interlaced and palms down-pressed she voiced the height and the depth of her bitterest woe. So low she spoke, her tones scarce rose above a quivering whisper of deep pain, yet each vibration reached his heart and pierced him through and through. "All might have been forgiven, Philip, save the lie. But your cloth proclaimed the sacred touch of the episcopalian hand, and I deemed you one of God's elect, as far above a subterfuge as is Truth above the price of rubies. Now, I am bereft of all, for I know not what *is Truth*, nor where!"

Now baffled by the teeming thought which would not let him be, the tortured man sank down upon his knees and pressed his fingers across his eyes; but he could not thus shut out the pain which was always his.

And he asked himself; "Who was he to rebuke another for choosing the life which he himself desired, even yet!"

As though it were yesterday he remembered that, twenty years before, a young man's passion had swept him off his feet and that, already vowed to the life of a celibate, he had allowed himself to be conquered by the beauty and grace of a spotless nature. *She* had known nothing of his consecrated life and, deeming him to be as free as she herself stood before God and man, she had pledged her life to his. Once the surrender had been made, she had unveiled before him the full joy of her love: the more bitter her cup of shame, when he, affrighted at that which he had done, laid bare his lie before her, ere, by sheer strength of will, he turned him about and sought the refuge of his cell.

From that day unto this, he had fought the great

fight out upon those same lines. Always had desire been defeated in the end; always had his magnificent will conquered the cravings of a naturally passionate nature. To-day, however, the Father realised that the old Adam had never been annihilated, but only temporarily suppressed each time. Had his long life of self-denial then been in vain? Was that lie, for which his young manhood was in the main responsible, ever to haunt him thus? Nay! his will should exercise the devil as before, and again he would rise above the natural man.

Aye, again, and once again, mayhap! But not for always, man of clay. That will of iron! 'Tis but a thing of naught—a carnal weapon of the human mind. And "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Look upwards, child of God! Incline thine ear, bend low thine heart, stretch high both hands and firmly grasping, ever wielding the two-edged sword of the Spirit, more than victor thou shalt be!

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." For "God is Spirit,"* and "the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

* "Revised Version," marginal note.

CHAPTER VI

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Away the stone is rolled:
  Wake, beloved, wake!
Sweet, thou'rt in the fold:
  Wake, beloved, wake!

Feel the arms of Love beneath thee:
  Wake, beloved, wake!
See the smile of Love to greet thee:
  Wake, beloved, wake!

Sweet, the dawn is here:
  Work, beloved, work!
Keep thy watch in trustful prayer:
  Work, beloved, work!

Sweet, the day grows bright:
  Love, beloved, love!
Watch, and pray and fight:
  Love, beloved, love!

Just before the holidays and during the same cold winter as that which saw Robert Saul bid his lonely farewell to St. Anselm, several small boys lay sleeping in one of the dormitories of a large preparatory school. All England lay beneath that deep darkness which often heralds the dawn, save where, in the open country, the snow-clad fields lent a faint light to the scene. The bright moon had gone to rest and the long narrow room, in which a dozen beds were ranged side by side, was entirely dark.

A week ago the Rev. Robert Saul had brought his nephew, Malcolm Stuart, a little Anglo-Indian, to this school, and had left him there the more confidently when he found, among the older boys, the brother of an old college friend of his own. Robby Campbell was, it appeared, the youngest of a large family, while Robert Saul's old friend, James, was the eldest. The thoughtful Scotchman and the brilliant young Scholar of New College had become intimate at Oxford, but the development of their respective views upon religious matters had, of late, built up a wall of reserve between them which neither attempted to break down. Nevertheless, Robert Saul was relieved to think that Robby Campbell, who, he observed, was a sufficiently self-contained little lad, would shepherd his nephew during his first term at a boarding school. For Malcolm was strange alike to England and to school life, and was but a bit of a child to fight all his own battles unaided.

At this early hour the whole house was asleep when a boy's voice was raised in fear, summoning the aid of a friendly hand.

"Robby, quick! I want you!"

The childish treble shot through the darkness of the wintry dawn and roused to conscious responsibility the sleeping boy, whose proud privilege it was to be Captain of the dormitory.

"What's the matter, Malcolm?"

"I want you, Robby, I—I'm frightened."

The note now struck was full of pain, and the sound wavered and fell as the boy's eyes grew big with fear.

The floor felt hard and cold against the Captain's little bare feet, and oh! his bed was nice and warm!

but Malcolm was "such a little kid," and such a very new boy, and—well! it wasn't so long ago that the Captain had been a new boy himself! And so, blinking sleepy eyes, and stumbling against little white beds—what a lot of them there seemed to be!—the boy reached the bedside where sat the demon, Fear.

The Captain didn't say much; he was so sleepy and it was just cold! but he put two hard arms around the baby neck—for Malcolm was scarcely more—and patted the short-cropped head with his schoolboy hand.

Presently the Captain forgot the cold, and he wasn't sleepy any more, for poor little Malcolm was blubbing out something so dreadful—something about "no one to love him—only Uncle Robert, his guardian, who gave him toys—lots—but didn't love him at all, and was often very stern; and never kissed him like—like—mother did, before—she—went to India."

At that the Captain considered. Boys never kissed, of course; but it must be awful to have no mother's kisses in the holidays; yet, he thought . . . well! he just didn't think any more about it, but he rubbed a plump cheek up and down and all around the little head, and put a shy kiss somewhere on Malcolm's baby face. Day was at hand, but it was still almost dark, and he accidentally fetched up in the region of nose tip, but Malcolm was too forlorn to be critical, and love was too rare and nice a thing to be anything but greedy about. And so, presently, when the Captain said that he must go back to bed, small man Malcolm was no longer afraid, for his heart was warm and not hungry any more, and best of all the phantom "Fear" had fled.

He didn't call it bad names, of course, nor analyse

his sensations at all (no boy of six would do so), but he just curled up into a little drowsy heap and slept as sweet, untroubled childhood should.

But the Captain lay awake. . . . And the lips were still and the eyes most grave, as the child gazed steadfastly towards the faint gold light of the coming day, and those angels, which always behold God's face, were with him, as the boy's young heart gave thanks, and *knew* that "God is *Love*."

CHAPTER VII

THE WORLD, THE FLESH AND EVIL

Truth crushed to earth shall rise again:
The eternal years of God are hers;
But error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies among her worshippers.
—*William Cullen Bryant.*

Mr. Saul was alone during the whole of his journey to London, and he was very glad to be thus undisturbed, for he was still dwelling upon the past. It was nearly four years ago, he remembered, that the social world of England had rung with the names of Lady Cecil Gwynne and the Prince Leo Berne; and now Robert Saul's mind was occupied in reviewing their wedding day, upon which occasion he had seen the Lady Cecil Gwynne for the first time in his life. The true story of that strange wedding has never yet been told; it is as follows.

Upon a hot June day in the height of the London season, much of the smart world had already assembled in a great London church, when Lady Margaret Courcy hastily entered a house in Grosvenor Square. Waving aside the servant, who came forward to know her wish, she passed him and herself opened a door upon the left of the hall.

"Cousin Margaret!" The Earl of Brecon was astonished, and for once he showed what he felt. He

was, besides, a little discomfited, and this also was made evident by his slightly ruffled demeanour.

"Brecon, you cannot know what you are doing! You cannot really mean to marry that child to Leo Berne!"

The Earl glanced indifferently at a beautiful white marble clock which stood upon the mantelpiece. He had quite regained his self-possession, but was inwardly very angry with himself for having lost it, even for a moment. He realised that he must be in a nervous mood, and sought to control all outward signs of his disquiet. Thus it was that his manner, always cold, became deliberately frigid in its hauteur.

"The others have already reached the church, and we start in five minutes," was his sole answer to Lady Margaret's protest.

His cousin rose impatiently from the chair into which she had thrown herself but one minute before.

"Brecon," she pleaded passionately, "think before it is too late. Cecil is scarcely seventeen, while Prince Leo's grandchild is over twenty! Oh! I know all that you would say! I know that he is hugely rich and of princely birth, but, Brecon—you, *you* do not know what his life has been! For years you have but rarely emerged from your library. What do you know of the world into which you would thus thoughtlessly plunge your sister? Think of her education under your aunt's wing! She is but a baby still. Think of that man's life! or at any rate believe me when I tell you that he is no fit mate for any girl."

"This certainly is no fit time to discuss the matter, my dear cousin; you should have come to me weeks ago." The Earl spoke softly and with great com-

posure, and as he spoke he pressed the bell behind him. "Inform her ladyship's maid," he said to the servant who answered his summons, "that the carriage is waiting."

Lady Margaret Courcy stood bewildered by the emergency of the moment. Had she raced her way across an ocean only to be too late! One more thing she could and would try; she would see Cecil herself.

Without another word to her cousin, she used the right which her close kinship, coupled with long custom, gave her and sought the girl in her own room.

"Cousin Margaret!"

The words which greeted her as she opened the bedroom door were precisely the same as those which she had heard upon entering the drawing-room, and again they held a note of astonishment within their tone: but, this time, they told of much besides.

Lady Margaret had intended to say many things, but now she found herself struck speechless. The tide of her passionate displeasure was all frozen by the sight of her young cousin in her bridal gown, for suddenly she realised fully that she was indeed too late!

Lady Cecil Gwynne dismissed her maid with a word and then turned and held the elder woman with both hands.

"Cousin Margaret," she whispered; "do you know that picture?"

Margaret Courcy turned the child's face to the light: but the eyes were calm, though ringed about the lids with shades of faintest purple.

"My dear," she answered softly, "what picture do you mean?"

The girl pressed her head against her cousin's shoul-

der, as I have seen a baby push its way about its mother's breast. Then slowly she lifted it and threw it back, clinging the while with nervous fingers to the strong touch of the elder woman's hands.

"It is painted by Brickdale," she muttered, "I saw it three days ago, and ever since it has haunted me by day and night. It shows a girl—like me, you know" (and she glanced slowly down upon her wedding dress), "and—by her side—her bridegroom: and oh!" she cried, "what does it mean? Underneath these words are written, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee.'"

The girl's low mutter had changed into a feeble wail, and she trembled now in every limb.

Before Lady Margaret Courcy could say one word of comfort, there came a sharp rap upon the door, and the Earl's voice was heard, courteous as ever, but peremptory in its tone.

"Cecil, we must start at once."

The Lady Cecil Gwynne flung one wild look about her, but her room spoke loudly of social tyranny and of that great whitened sepulchre which men call "the world," before the door of which there stood, she knew, a stone too heavy for her to roll away. There upon the wall hung a picture of that Royal Duchess who had chosen for her child a husband, while that child was yet a child. Nor had she paused to ask whether holy inspiration would be present while they wed, as upon that day when man and woman stood together long ago in Galilee, and the Christ turned water into wine. Within that desk there lay, she knew, a hundred letters and more, each one glossing over with soft words a thing which never should have been—

the betrothal of one who knew *not*, to one who knew that which never should be known; the betrothal of one who had not eaten of the poisoned fruit, to one who had partaken of the knowledge of good and evil so freely that now he knew not which was good nor which was evil. For to eat of this tree, the head must be buried in the mist, and the vision blinded by the thoughts of earth. Above the mist—in the sunlight of Truth—there is no such tree; for evil cannot be where *all* is Good. And in the Light of reality there grows only "the tree of Life" in the midst of the garden—that tree, the leaves of which are "for the healing of the nations."

Now, as the girl's baffled glance sought her cousin's face for aid, the Earl knocked once more. Helpless, she turned and, opening the door, led the way downstairs. She stepped instantly into the waiting carriage and knew that the Earl seated himself beside her, but she neither raised her eyes nor noticed him at all. Proudly she held herself aloof and gave no token of his presence there.

Left alone in the deserted room, Lady Margaret Courcy dropped suddenly upon her knees.

"Dear God," she cried, "stop this foul thing, I pray! . . . For such a child, 'tis blackest shame to wed with Leo Berne!"

. . . . . .

The church was lavishly decorated; indeed the air was overweighted by the scent of the tall lilies, which lined the chancel steps and fronted the choir stalls. They looked a little hard and cold against their background of green fern, standing stiffly just where the hired hand had placed them. No woman's loving eye

had criticised the whole, else here and there a softer touch would now have been revealed.

The bridegroom waited with what grace he could beside the topmost pew. But in his heart he cursed the ways of his tyrant world, which make a public show of every man and maid upon their wedding day. Had he been less worn, he could have carried himself with a braver face, but there comes a time to such men as Leo Berne, when even they themselves must realise that no art can restore aught of that which they have squandered into the lap of sensuality and shame.

"Would she never come?"

By the great doors there waited a little lad and a little lass. With much-frilled frock and quaint headgear the little lady held her own; the worldly product of a worldly world, she stood there all too self-possessed. While the wee laddie, fresh from his Highland home, with strong brown limbs uncovered at the knee, held himself with a freer grace, born of the wildness of the merry moorland breeze and the breadth of the northern skies. And his sunny smile woke in many a weary heart sweet memories of golden gorse and heather bells.

"Robby!"—the little Lady Isobel spoke softly, but with intonation cold and proud—"See! here comes the bride! you must hold her train up there—just where the orange flowers rest upon the lace."

As the soft rustle of silvered satin met the ear, proclaiming the advent of the bride, every head turned as far as etiquette permitted, and more than one heart grew sick, more than one manly brow flushed hot with wrath, as the fair, pure maid passed up the aisle.

Many noted that the bride's young face was white and stern withal for one of tender years, and her car-

riage more rigid than it should have been. With stately step and coldest mien she passed between the expectant throng. Her little hand scarce touched her brother's arm, and she leant upon him not at all. Too soon the organ's dying breath was hushed, and the priest's words were heard with their note of solemn warning—seldom heeded by those who, having ears, yet do not hear. "Therefore," he read, "if any man can show any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, *or else hereafter forever hold his peace.*"

One woman there was in that great assembly, who almost raised her voice in protest. But what had she to say, that priest or layman could take *legal* note of? Perforce she must stand by and hold her peace, while the priest charged man and maid that, as they both should answer at the judgment day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, if either knew any impediment why they might not couple in the sight of God, they should now confess it.

Then a fresh voice struck upon each waiting ear, as a second priest came forward and asked the man before him, if he would keep himself for her alone, as long as they both should live? And the old man's voice, worn out before its time, made glib reply, "I will."

But ere the priest could turn him to the maid and ask the self-same question of her youth, a strange thing came about, and all that congregation stood aghast, bewildered by the action of a frightened child.

It happened in a moment, as such things must, or not at all. Following the priest's grave glance as it rested upon the man beside her, Lady Cecil Gwynne had met her bridegroom's eye. Though dim with age,

it yet held the light of an unholy desire, which chilled her very heart and almost stopped its beat. As in a lightning flash she saw the chasm over which she hung, though even then she realised only something of its depth.

With rapid movement, she swung from east to west, and fled with swift and purposeful steps straight down the aisle. Her face was whiter than before, and quivered in its pain, but the terror in her eyes was worst of all to see. Still speeding her footsteps on the while, nor looking to the right or left, "Margaret," she whispered, through tense lips, "Margaret Courcy, come to me!"

It was the hour of her greatest need, and Love arose and met her in the way, sending the comfort of a woman's presence to her side. And thus, her trembling hand warm-wrapped within another's strong and tender clasp, she passed without the door.

The swiftness of her flight had left the Earl, her brother, thunderstruck, till suddenly black rage possessed him and, with face aflame, he strode along the aisle; nor paused until his foot pressed hard upon his carriage step.

"Her Ladyship," the footman told him, "has been taken ill, and the Lady Margaret Courcy has driven home with her."

Within the church the old man turned him to the wall, and wept. No sorrow was in his heart, for he had only loved her youth! Nor was he bereft of aught; with title and with lands he could buy him another bride as young and fair. But men and women laughed at him, and he had rather that he died. Though every face was grave, though every mouth was stern,

he saw the laughter tremble in each eye; and so—he turned him to the wall and wept, and hated all the world.

. . . . .

Just as I have told you now, this thing happened, and as Robert Saul's train sped Londonward upon the morning of his departure from St. Anselm's he mentally reviewed that weird marriage scene, for he it was who, turning to the maid to receive her marriage vows, had suddenly seen written upon her terror-stricken face the purpose which, an instant later, struck consternation into the heart of each man and woman in that church.

And, now, he had irrevocably dissolved his ties at St. Anselm's, in order that he might ask that maid to become his wife.

Part II

MORTALS WEAVING IN THE DARK

CHAPTER VIII

A MAN AND A WOMAN

Sensations sweet
Felt in the blood and felt along the heart.
—*Wordsworth.*

Arriving in London, Mr. Saul drove to his hotel and ordered breakfast. He went straight to his room, and emerged an hour later apparently much refreshed. The sharp challenge of ice-cold water had sent the blood tingling through his veins and had, for the moment, dashed aside the marks of his sleepless night.

But he was nervous and restless still, for the issue of the day meant much to him. He scarcely tasted the fried sole upon his plate. Though he had not broken his fast before leaving St. Anselm's, he could not eat the dainty meal before him. He was a man quite unaccustomed to be thus controlled by circumstance, and half unconsciously he resented this new-born helplessness. It was a small matter, however, and would pass, of course; certainly it was not worth a second thought, while the purpose of his life still lay before him.

Returning to his own room, Mr. Saul passed his silk handkerchief round his hat, and brushed, for the third time that morning, his already spotless coat. He was at all times a man of particular neatness, though of personal vanity he possessed scarcely a particle. To-day, however, for the very first time in his life, he asked himself whether there was that about him

which women deem desirable? *He* saw nothing to attract in the strong, rather harsh lines of his face; and indeed, the straight beauty of his features was somewhat marred by certain indications of obstinacy, denoted chiefly by the overweight of the chin. The head was magnificent but for this defect, though the more critical of his acquaintances would have said that the large eyes were too gloomy and lent darkness rather than light to the clever face. His form was erect, but his carriage spoke plainly of a certain habit of thought which made him attempt always to rule, when at times his object would have been more harmoniously achieved could he have called sweet patience to his aid. But standing high above his fellows in point of intellect and being possessed of a rare strength of character, he often carried all before him, and his faults were usually completely lost sight of. He was, however, a man who won his way far more often by means of his unique personality and a certain invincible determination, than by the love he inspired. Indeed, there were few who loved Robert Saul, though there were many who asked nothing better than to follow where he should lead. It had always been so. At school and at college he had inspired a deep admiration among both those who knew him slightly and among his very few intimate acquaintances, but he had always been a man of rare friendships and of a solitary habit of life. Thus it was that a great heart-hunger had grown with his growth and would now no longer be denied; hence his real suffering that morning when the Father had so curtly dismissed him from St. Anselm, cutting him to the quick by giving the lie to the affection which Robert Saul had believed existed between them.

As he walked towards Grosvenor Square, he asked himself whether he had just made the great mistake of his life! He reflected that the maid of seventeen had, with passing years, grown into a womanhood which, by reason of an unusual reserve, betrayed but little of itself and was almost a hidden book to him. He realised, however, that Lady Cecil Gwynne had allowed him more than once to know something of her deeper nature. Sometimes he fancied that a sort of gratitude had stirred her to a greater freedom, when alone with him, than ever she permitted to another. Once, though only once, she had referred to their first strange meeting, upon what should have been her wedding day.

"My brother," she had told him, "is a man so studious and so unready to believe the worst of anyone, that I easily understand his ignorance of Prince Leo's character. Many have misunderstood the line he took, and at the time judged his action harshly. I myself thought that he acted selfishly; later, I realised that, to a man of his precise and quiet habits, the advent of a sister needing his guidance through the maze of an indefinite number of seasons seemed an overwhelming inconvenience. Our mother died when he was only sixteen, and he, ever engrossed in his books, took no note of the twentieth century girl, who has been born with independence in her blood. Thus Prince Leo's offer for my hand, made as it was while I was yet abroad, appeared to him to come as a means of relief from a tiresome position. It was incomprehensible to him that I should wish to oppose such an alliance, for he regarded it, save for the one unimportant detail of the disparity in age, as one that was in

every way desirable." And then she had added, with a sudden shyness, "Mr. Saul, I should like, this once, to thank you for your help upon that day. It was something in your grave look which finally awoke me to a knowledge of the unhallowed life before me, should I marry where I could never love. It was something in your face which supported my desperate resolve to stop the performance of that which, quite suddenly, I clearly saw to be a sacrilegious ceremony."

Musing upon the past, Mr. Saul reached Lord Brecon's house, and was recalled to the present by hearing a motor slacken speed behind him. He turned abruptly round and, recognising Lady Cecil Gwynne, hastened towards the car, from which she was just alighting.

Then he behaved stupidly, a thing he rarely did: he was absurdly embarrassed. He had pictured their meeting many times during the last twelve hours, but now that it came unexpectedly upon him, he remembered only that he had not seen the woman he loved for a year, and that it was good to be with her again. For the moment, he completely forgot his surroundings —forgot the well-trained silent men-servants, one of whom stood behind his mistress, while another held open the hall door. A slight gravity passed, as a shadow, over the brightness of Cecil Gwynne's face, and Mr. Saul became aware that he was holding her hand longer than was permissible. Hurriedly he stood aside, flushing hotly; angry with himself, yet helpless, for to apologise was impossible.

"My brother," Lady Cecil said, "hopes that you will forgive him if he is a little late. I got your note by the second post this morning, just as he was start-

ing for the city, but he expects to be back, at any rate, soon after lunch. There is a knotty point," and Cecil Gwynne smiled, "in Sanskrit which he thinks that you can solve. He is quite looking forward to a long and learned discussion with you upon the subject; he becomes more of a bibliomaniac every day."

Chatting thus easily, his hostess led the way into the library, and following her, Mr. Saul replied that his Sanskrit was rusty, but that he would do his best.

Lady Cecil Gwynne's perfect self-possession at once put him at his ease, and he became immediately the well-bred man of the world.

During lunch they found, as such people would, all that was necessary to say, and sustained a bright conversation about men and matters of interest.

Mr. Saul knew that his hostess was an unusually well-educated woman, for, after the *esclandre* of a few years ago, she had completely given herself up to a life of quiet study and had only lately taken her place in society by her brother's side.

One gift the brother and sister possessed in common; both were musical to a remarkable degree and both had devoted much time and expense to perfecting their talents. Indeed, music had been the bond which had first drawn Mr. Saul into their circle. He had not only a passionate love for it, but was the possessor of a beautiful voice. When he sang, even the hypercritical were satisfied, for he was a man of too fastidious a taste to be content to do anything indifferently well. His clear sweet tenor would never have been heard, even by an average audience, had not circumstances enabled him to cultivate his gift to a pitch of rare perfection.

Now, he and his hostess talked of music and litera-

ture, and Lady Cecil was able to tell him of much that he had missed during his year of voluntary exile from the world. But it was a relief to them when lunch was over, though no onlooker could have guessed that both his mind and hers had been busy during the whole repast with purely personal matters, the while that they had kept the ball of conversation rolling so gaily.

Rising, Lady Cecil led the way through the large folding doors into the library. This was a delightful room, and seemed to catch and hold all the brightness that the winter's day gave forth. Mr. Saul knew his hostess' sun-loving nature, and that the rooms she occupied should be full of light and colour seemed natural to him. For a little while, he did not try to find much to say. He was content simply to be there; and, indeed, he now wondered what fictitious power could ever have drawn him to turn from this life of joy and gladness towards the sombre existence which he had voluntarily endured for a whole year past.

And Lady Cecil Gwynne wondered too—wondered why Robert Saul had thus suddenly rushed back into her life without explanation, even as he had left it! His note had told her nothing. And yet it seemed to her that he would not have written at all—would not now be there—unless his doubts and fears were finally at rest. That he loved her she knew perfectly; for she had clearly seen his struggle when, a year before, he had chosen that which he then believed to be the better part. At the time she had been aware that one word, one look even, would have kept him by her side—her declared and affianced lover. But it had never crossed her mind to say that word or give the smallest sign. Her nature was intensely proud and had been wounded

to the core when, at the age of seventeen, she had stood before her world, the involuntary heroine of a social fiasco. She knew—indeed she had known for a long time—that unless she married Robert Saul, she would remain unmarried always. But not even to her one most loved and intimate friend, Lady Margaret Courcy, would she have breathed the fact of Mr. Saul's devotion to her, until he should completely capitulate to its power and ask her to be his wife. She had believed him to be mistaken when he left her side, but she was wise beyond her years, and had then told herself that no emotional religion of that kind could hold such a man for long. She had felt, however, that it was best for him to test its strength, as thus he would most surely discover its weakness. *Now*, he had either come to tell her that she had been right, or—he had come to bid her a final farewell.

Putting his coffee cup upon an inlaid stool beside him, Mr. Saul watched the girl for some moments as she knelt by the fire idly beating the burning logs into a brighter blaze. He noted the richness of her white cloth dress, and the beauty of the single diamond which caught together the lace upon her bosom, leaving her firm white throat uncovered.

He pressed his foot upon the thick carpet which almost covered the polished boards, and as he did so shifted his chair a little in order that he might watch her the more comfortably. His slight movement turned a revolving bookcase which stood beside him and a feast of literature faced him—books for the most part plainly bound, though here and there a richer cover caught his eye. Many were old friends, but several were unfamiliar to him—published during the last year, no doubt.

He withdrew one of the latter and passed his finger absently over the white and gold of the thick calf. Idly turning a few of the gilt-edged leaves and glancing at the contents, he moved and stirred some hot-house flowers which stood in a vase upon the bookcase. The subtle sweetness of their scent reached him, and he leant back in his chair again. It was strange how the man dawdled, deliberately postponing the finale for which he longed. But, never for an instant wavering in his purpose, Robert Saul feasted, as the epicure feasts, whose greed is the very refinement of desire.

Lady Cecil was not looking at him, and he watched her steadily, saying to himself that it was good to be back again in this world of warmth and beauty. For it was *his* world—the one into which he had been born, and in which he had been bred. The comfort now surrounding him seemed, as it were, to satisfy that part of his nature which he had tried so hard to starve of late. Rather grimly, he realised that his year of abstinence at St. Anselm's had, in this respect, been wasted time; for now he felt that he was more at home in this palace of delight than ever he had been under that almost monastic régime.

Suddenly he rose; his action was not only unpremeditated; it was involuntary. Indeed, he was unaware of his own movements until he found himself standing beside Lady Cecil Gwynne. He had never been quite so near to her before. The edge of his frock coat almost brushed against her shoulder as he, still not guiding his actions by conscious thought, put out his right hand and closed it upon the rounded edge of the mantelshelf. Pressing upon it, he stood upright—a little stiffly—as though afraid of the power

which possessed him. Half bewildered by the force of this strong thing which almost mastered him, he tried to speak, but could not. The girl's face slowly flushed but she did not move. She could not. Both realized that this was, for each, a supreme moment, and the silence became charged with intense emotion.

At last Robert Saul spoke, not in his usual voice at all, but softly, with a curious distinctness.

"I want," he said, "to speak to you."

Bending over the kneeling girl, he took her hands in his and slowly lifted her until she stood beside him.

"Little Lady Cecil," he whispered, "you know, of course, why I have come! It is"—and now he laughed a little, and his whole face brightened with the thought behind it—"it is—because I cannot help it."

Lady Cecil looked down upon her hands still tightly held within the man's firm clasp, but seemingly she could find no word to say.

It was strange to her to hear this man speak so humbly. His very assumption of helplessness had for her a charm. She instinctively felt that such a position was new to him, and that for one who knew his own power as did Robert Saul, the confession which he had just made implied a surrender as rare as it was complete.

Presently Mr. Saul spoke again. "Cecil," he asked gravely, "what day will you marry me?"

At that the girl drew back. But now she found that she too must laugh a little. For what had she here? Gentleness truly, but some assurance also, it would seem!

"What day," she said, "will I marry a man who has not even asked me for my hand? Why, do you

know, . . . the question seems to me to be a little premature, and——" . . . But before she could say more, she found herself closely folded within masterful arms. Tenderly, but with a touch that would no longer be denied, Robert Saul held her to him; and now his face was grave and whiter than it was wont to be and, when next he spoke, his beautiful voice was very soft.

"My dear," he said, "I doubt not that I am a clumsy wooer, but, does it matter, little one? You know that we have always loved each other; does anything matter, except that soon you will be altogether mine?"

Then, as for the first time in her life, a man's lips pressed upon her own and thus woke to a tremulous sense of life that which she did not know her nature held within itself, Lady Cecil thanked God that years before the courage had been hers to turn away from the unhallowed embrace which had then awaited her upon the threshold of her early womanhood. Even now, half dismayed at the strength of this new joy, which yet carried in its train a sense of weakness, she withdrew herself from the arms that sought to hold her closer.

Robert Saul, knowing her pride and understanding better than did the girl herself the flush upon her cheek and the deepening of the shadow in her eyes, let her go. With a patience which surprised himself he asked no more of the present. Growing strangely wise by reason of the love he bore her, he told himself that to ask more now would be to risk the full ripening of that rich harvest which lay out-stretched in golden thought before him; and as he looked at the sweet face so near to him, he knew that he loved her the better for

her proud reserve. Then, for the space of one heart-beat he held his breath as he mentally drank in a foretaste of their future life together—a life filled to the full with that living love which, he told himself, can only come to those who give, each to the other, the first-fruits of their man-and-womanhood.

For an hour and more they were undisturbed, and it seemed that there was not much to say. Both were content to rest awhile within the atmosphere of calm and quiet sympathy with which their mutual love surrounded them.

That night all Robert Saul's doubts were laid to rest, and the past year dropped out of his thought and was more completely forgotten than are the dead above whose head the living walk. For man can only love one thing supremely at the time, and for Robert Saul a wonderful new life had now opened up, and he loved it: moreover he knew that he loved it, as he never had loved that other life which now seemed to have no more reality than a dream belonging to the distant past.

CHAPTER IX

DAY DREAMS

The outward symbols disappear
From him whose inward sight is clear,
And small must be the choice of days
To him who fills them all with praise!

—*Whittier.*

The months that followed the announcement of their engagement were the happiest that either Lady Cecil Gwynne or Mr. Saul had ever known. They told each other that they had never anticipated such joy; and the watching world exclaimed aside, that it was strange indeed that two such suitable people should have decided to marry one another. Absolutely nothing occurred to mar the brightness of the early days of their courtship, during which the winter snows fled and nature donned her petticoats of green.

The Earl of Brecon was unaffectedly glad at the prospect of being relieved of the care of his young sister, for he was thus quite free to spend long hours alone with his books. He was also genuinely pleased that she should have elected to marry a man so much after his own heart—not that he and Robert Saul had natures at all akin, but both men were educated above the common, and both were deeply religious.

For years the Earl had been upon the point of joining the Church of Rome. But only Mr. Saul and one other—a priest whose influence had been closely inter-

woven with the young nobleman's Oxford career—knew this. For Lord Brecon's nature was so sensitive, and his religion was to him of such vital importance, that he at all times preferred to listen to the views of others upon this sacred subject, rather than to inform them of his own.

He had not yet gone over to Rome, chiefly because the ceremonial which he found among the extreme High Churchmen of his time had, up to the present, seemed to satisfy the hunger within him. And yet he was not altogether content. While listening to the beautiful music of the choir or to some young chorister's thrilling soprano, he thought himself to be at rest; content he also seemed to feel, when returning from confessional. It was certainly an immense relief to cast the burden of his sins into the priestly ear and to start once more upon life's journey free and unfettered by the past. But these times of comfortable irresponsibility were apt to be followed by periods of severe reaction which, in their turn, left the man sad and sore perplexed. But he never for a moment doubted that the path which he followed would in time lead him to the perfect day; and here it was that his views and those of Mr. Saul were identical. The latter's passionate nature, however, made him more actively intolerant than Lord Brecon would ever be of every form of worship which departed from the ritual which he deemed essential to salvation. Thus, of the two men Robert Saul was certain to take things more hardly, should one he cared for hold views opposed to his own upon this most important matter.

The Earl of Brecon held a recognised place among the Churchmen of the day, and this brought him into

touch with those in authority in the Church of England, which, as an organisation, has its social and political side, as well as its religious aspect; and it had been a great pleasure to him to use the not inconsiderable interest which his position gave him, to secure for his prospective brother-in-law the charge of one of the most sought after parishes in London.

The reputation which Mr. Saul now rapidly acquired as a great preacher was enhanced by his vigorous personality, and further by the charm of his beautifully modulated voice. The congregation at St. Peter's was of precisely the right composition to enjoy his cultured sermons. His delivery was the perfection of scholarly ability, and the large church was soon filled, Sunday after Sunday, with the most fastidious audience possible. Critical as his congregation was, his sermons were described as an intellectual feast; and the beautiful music, which Mr. Saul took care should be perfectly rendered, helped to draw an educated and fashionable audience from far and near. Churchmen predicted a great future for the young clergyman, who possessed the unusual combination of great gifts and a fearless energy. It was reported, and believed by many, that shortly after his induction Mr. Saul had been told that a certain ceremony, which he had inaugurated at St. Peter's, must be dropped. He had, report declared, politely but firmly refused to abate one jot or one tittle of the ritual, which he considered a means of grace and necessary to all who would walk in the straight and narrow way; and he had won his point. Whether by the indomitable courage of his mental attitude or by his undoubted charm of manner, it matters not—he remained Vicar of St.

Peter's and continued to devote himself, heart and soul, to the regeneration of the large West End parish.

It seemed to Mr. Saul, that in winning such an one as Cecil for his wife, he had obtained the one thing needful to the rounding of his lot. A graceful hostess, gifted with a delicate tact, Lady Cecil would make an ideal wife for a clergyman already holding a conspicuous position in the Church and who was certain to rise to higher preferment.

For the present Cecil Gwynne was content—as were most men and women who fell under Robert Saul's magnetic influence—to follow, without comment or question, wherever he should point the way. The girl believed herself to be altogether at rest in his love. Her hitherto lonely life seemed intolerable when she compared it with the sunny days of the happy companionship that she now enjoyed in the society of her lover. Much of her shy reserve melted under the warmth of Robert's tender care; and at times Cecil Gwynne seemed to him to be so altogether desirable, that it was with difficulty that he found patience to wait the passing of the early spring, for he fully realised that her nature held depths which he had not yet been permitted to sound, and he was eager to sound them. He understood, however, that not until they were man and wife would this beautiful flower unfold all its petals and display the full treasure that her heart contained. In his calm moments he loved her the better, in that she gave him always less than he desired, but at other times his passionate longing to be always beside her made the hours spent apart from her seem long and altogether dark.

Of the two Lady Cecil was the more completely happy at this period. The present was full enough of joy for her. She had unbounded trust in the thoughtful care which seemed to anticipate her every wish, and her admiration for Robert Saul daily increased as she watched his busy life. She realised clearly that his courageous judgment and cultured thought were rapidly placing him in the first rank among the foremost men of his day; and that he stood upon the threshold of a great career. She would help him to make that career truly great! Her own high social standing naturally placed her far above any vulgar personal ambition, but she was nevertheless very eager to see her lover rise to a position of eminence in the Church. Robert must be the best man of his day—the cleverest, the most learned, *and the most good.*

Her ideal was high, and Robert Saul was much further from the manifestation thereof than she realised at that time. Later, she saw all things more clearly, and in those "latter days" she looked back at this ideal and instantly dethroned it, bowing in mute obedience before that standard of infinite perfection raised on high by the meekest man on earth—a standard unto which none have yet attained, chiefly because all have deemed it impossible really to follow where he has led. . . . All? nay! One to whom a world's gratitude is due, now points to that standard which still waves on high, unsullied throughout the centuries; and pointing, she has reminded a suffering world that nearly two thousand years ago these emphatic words were uttered by him of whom we read, that his word

shall never pass away until fulfilled; "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect;" and again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

But how many are there who *really* believe these words? How many are there who even attempt to prove their faith by their works? Some few there *are* who seek to do the Master's work *in the manner of his appointing*. Some few there are who *know* that the Nazarene was the practical Way-shower and no mere idealist. And their number and their might increase daily in spite of Church and State—in spite of that merely numerical majority, which still looks askance at the healing Christ, who comes as of yore offering to humanity full salvation from sin, disease and death.

Oh, hungry, yet blind of heart! Wilt thou not pause awhile and heed the pathos of that cry; "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" Wilt thou not seat thee for a silent moment at the feet of Jesus and learn of the Nazarene? But first, must thou bow thy proud head; first, must thou bend thy stiffened knee and smite upon thy haughty breast. Nay, more!—and harder still—thou must descend from thy high estate and cast aside thy broad phylacteries. Thus only canst thou lift thy *heart* to God and send forth the humble cry, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then shalt thou note the holy joy upon the elder Brother's face; then shalt thou feel the healing love flow from his heart; then shalt thou receive the Christly benedic-

tion, "Thy faith hath made thee whole; Go in peace." And thus shalt thou arise refreshed and go forth to do the Master's work, more mighty in thy meekness than ever in thy state—"not unclothed, but clothed upon"—the joy of heaven within thine eyes, and the calm of God upon thy breast.

CHAPTER X

PARTIAL ECLIPSE

God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

—*Ecclesiastes.*

It was now early May, and their wedding-day was very near at hand. Lady Cecil Gwynne was in Scotland and wished to be quietly married from her old northern home; for she not unnaturally shrank from the publicity of a large social function. Mr. Saul was content either way, so long as he might speedily claim her altogether for his own. He had been surprised to find of late that it was in him to be jealous. Indeed, his masterful nature had rebelled many times of late when, standing by, he had watched his *fiancée* resting upon the arm of some one or other of the smart men of her circle, while floating through the mazes of a waltz. Mr. Saul had never danced, and would not have considered it possible for a man of his calling to do so with dignity. He told himself that, once Cecil was his wife, she must do as he wished in all such matters. He disliked to see married women dancing at any time, and from his point of view such a thing was out of the question for a clergyman's wife. But meanwhile, he was forced to look calmly on, though in his heart he envied the men who waltzed with the woman whom he passionately loved.

More than once he asked himself, in the bitterness of his unreasoning jealousy, whether Cecil really *did* love him, at any rate, as he counted loving? She seemed so perfectly happy when with others of her set. Was it likely that she should be able to surrender herself utterly to her husband? But nothing less than complete surrender would satisfy Robert Saul. Cecil Gwynne must be his, and his entirely—his to love and cherish, but his also to command.

To-day, however, Mr. Saul put all such thoughts aside, for he was on his way to see Cecil for the last time before their marriage. As the Scotch express whirled on upon its northern journey, he congratulated himself upon being the only occupant of the comfortable first-class carriage in which he travelled, for he wished to be alone.

The sweet spring sunshine poured in through the open windows and filled the air with light; bright and tender greens clothed the landscape with a beauty full of promise; soft yellows and delicate purples caught his eye, as the train rocked onward, for in this joyous month of May Nature spreads her flowery carpet upon bank and woodland floor. Primroses and wild hyacinths rivalled each other in their new-born loveliness, and the young ferns pushed their curled fronds upwards through their mossy coverlet, as though to woo Spring's warm embrace, as it whispered of the sunny days to come. Upon each hedgerow was a mantle of bright emerald, while below him and upon either side, as they slackened speed and breasted a steep incline, was a cloudy sea of apple blossom—each soft white mass kissed into warmth by the sunset flush of its outer petals. And now they passed a meadow full

of young life—tiny lambs side by side with their sober mothers—one independent baby away there by itself, a sleepy ball of softest white.

Mr. Saul never forgot that journey. For that short space of time he was more at peace than ever before in his turbulent life—turbulent, because he made it so. He lived hard and knew no other way of living. That to which Robert Saul once put his will was always carried through in less time, and better, than was the case with other men. He undertook nothing lightly, but once his mind was made up, none had ever known him to unmake it—no *man*, at least. In the single instance of his courtship of Lady Cecil Gwynne, he knew that a woman's sweet attraction had kept him wavering between two opinions, until actually he, of all men, had let "I dare not" wait upon "I would." But in the end the charm of her love had drawn him irrevocably to her side, and finally his capitulation had been complete.

Now a great stillness possessed the man. His heart was overfull of gratitude, and he murmured a supplicating prayer that he might prove worthy of the wealth, the honour, and—the purest joy of all—the love, which now filled his life to overflowing. The cup was sweet to his thirsting lips and he drank and drank again. With eyes half closed and lips whispering the joy which he could not altogether hold in leash, his vivid thought flashed across the intervening days, and he seemed to hold his newly-wedded wife within his arms. Then a deep reverence for her spotless maidenhood fell upon his heart and bade his passionate thought be still. "Dear God," he breathed, "that a thing so white and pure should be my own!"

Very quiet he sat, as the day passed on to eventide and lost its beauty in the darkness of the night.

Later, he roused himself and thus broke the sweet chain of thought which bound his limbs and held them motionless. For soon his journey would be ended, and then—Cecil's hand would rest within his own, and Cecil's soft caress would fall upon his hungering lips!

He was surprised, and very pleased also, to see Lord Brecon at the station, for it was late, and he had not expected that the Earl would leave his library after dinner; but Lord Brecon's first words shocked him into a complete coldness.

"Robert, I am glad that you have come! I must have wired for you otherwise!"

"What do you mean?" Mr. Saul asked sternly, through suddenly straightened lips. But already he seemed to guess the worst, for he drew his tall form up stiffly and braced himself as though to battle with a storm.

"Don't be alarmed," Lord Brecon spoke reassuringly, but he looked worried and indeed ill. "There has been an accident."

Upon the instant he found his arm grasped by an iron hand and himself flung round, till he faced the stricken man who towered above him.

"Be quick;" and Robert held the Earl with quiet strength.

Though he scarcely reached above his friend's shoulder, Lord Brecon lowered his eyes, for he hated the task before him. That it must, however, be at once performed, he knew, so he told Mr. Saul, as kindly and briefly as he could, that his sister's horses had

bolted that afternoon and, upsetting the carriage, had thrown her heavily against a stone wall. She was still unconscious, but the local doctors were with her and Mr. Huntly, a specialist, had been wired for and would doubtless leave London by the night mail.

Robert never spoke through all that long drive home. He sat as though carved in stone, his elbows pressed upon his knees, and his grand head buried in his hands. Lord Brecon was too kind—and too wise also—to disturb him, and indeed both men were occupied in silently praying for the one life to be spared. Robert prayed as he never had prayed before; prayed that, if a life must needs go out, it might be his own and not that of the woman for whom he would, he told his God, willingly die a thousand deaths.

At last the motor had passed the outer gates. A moment later it crossed an old drawbridge and drew up in front of the principal entrance to the Castle. Upon the top of a somewhat narrow flight of steps, and within the doorway, stood a woman. Her slight, almost childish figure was sharply silhouetted by the light from an oil lamp which stood upon a rough stone shelf in the outer hall. Both men sprang from the car, and asked the same question as they alighted.

"Still unconscious;" was the reply, "and the doctors wish her to be kept very quiet, so I have left her with the nurse."

Let us look for a moment at the woman who now gave what poor encouragement she could to the two anxious men, as they eagerly questioned her. A very small and dainty person was Miss Beresford. With a voice always gentle and a manner protestingly quiet, she was called by many affected. Half an hour's

real conversation with her was usually enough, however, to dispel this impression and to convey to the stranger that which her friends understood perfectly, namely, that here was one of the kindest and truest natures in the world.

Miss Beresford had watched tenderly over Lord Brecon's childhood and over that of his sister, and had done her best to supply their mother's place. Yet both her nephew and Cecil had, while loving and respecting her for her unselfish devotion to their domestic interests, grown up to regard her as something needing care and protection. Now, however, the little woman's love for her niece lent her a fictitious strength of both mind and body. With an apparent calmness, which surprised herself and all the household, she immediately constituted herself head nurse; nor did she relinquish the position, until her own health failed under the strain of the anxious days and long sleepless nights which followed Cecil's accident.

During this period of intense anxiety, the Earl took many lonely rides and hardly read a page of the new book which Mr. Saul had brought down for him and for which he had eagerly longed. He was passing through a time of great distress of mind; for he was unconsciously testing his religion and, hourly, he found it wanting. Not even to Robert Saul would he have owned that it had utterly failed him. Lord Brecon believed his sister Cecil to be dying, and he tortured himself by fears and doubts as to her future state, for everything seemed uncertain and vague in the extreme. How was it that he could do no more than conjecture about existence beyond the grave? Often this man, who had a strain of sadness in his

nature and was sometimes deeply depressed, was wearied by his unsatisfied life and told himself that death, when it should come to *him*, would come as a friend. But seeing it approach one dear to him, Lord Brecon suddenly asked himself, of what avail would be the laying aside of this mortal coil? Unexpectedly, a great question arose in his mind and haunted him. Suppose that, after all, he and Cecil, and indeed all those who thought as they did, should be mistaken? Until lately he had felt sure that his ethical views were right, but he now asked himself what proof had he to substantiate these views?

The Earl began to wish that his religion was founded upon something more reasonable, more tangible, than the theories of men. Something within him rose up in strong rebellion, dissatisfied with a faith so blind as his. Suddenly affrighted, he asked himself why he accepted as truth certain dogmas of this faith. Was it not, after all, simply because he had been taught in his childhood to accept them blindly? Of late years certain contradictions had faced him. But he was aware that these same contradictions had vexed many others, wiser than himself, and had been put aside by them as mysteries incomprehensible to man. Discontented that it should be so, but crushed into helplessness by the thought of a world's failure to understand its God, he had endeavoured, in *his* turn, to put them aside unsolved. Now, however, these perplexing points marshalled themselves before his mental vision, each demanding his acceptance, but each refusing to join hands with its neighbour, for not even a world's apathy can reconcile the irreconcilable.

Wearily he sought a sorry refuge in the almost

universally accepted dictum, that it was never intended that man should penetrate the mysteries of divine metaphysics; rather must he be content to wait until death should solve the problem of being.

But Lord Brecon, though he argued thus, was aware of a sense of defeat. He did not say, even to himself, that he had merely brushed aside the inevitable for a time, but he realised distinctly that, in the hour of his need, he had gone for shelter and support to that which he had believed to be a rock, only to find that it failed him utterly, evading him as some elusive shadow might have done. Built of nothing more substantial than traditional sentiment, nurtured only by man-made theories and human doctrines, his religion could not stand the test of a man's great need. It had for its foundation a merely *human* conception—a thing of form and ceremony—never instituted by the Way-shower, Jesus the Christ.

It was an indication of the fact that no real unity of religious thought existed between them, that Mr. Saul and Lord Brecon felt quite unable to help each other at this period, though each desired to do so. Theologically, their creed was the same; practically, each was beset by troubled thought of which he felt he could speak to no one, for who would understand? Robert Saul spent long hours in his room, sitting still and silent, facing the probability of a future without Cecil by his side. So entirely had she become part of his inner life, that more than once he rose suddenly from his chair, fiercely declaring aloud that she should not die. It was impossible. They were made for each other! The one was incomplete, he told himself, without the other.

Then one morning Lord Brecon, accompanied by his aunt, called Mr. Saul into the library. Miss Beresford's plain little face was wreathed with tremulous smiles.

"The doctors," she said, "have just left . . . and . . . and . . . Cecil will live."

She had not meant to tell him thus suddenly, but she was overdone and quite hysterical.

Eleanor Beresford was the kindest of women, and had scarcely left her niece's room of late, but now that the worst was over, she completely broke down and had to be gradually nursed back to health and calmness. She had risen to the occasion nobly, but only at the expense of her own health; and during the weeks of prostration which followed, Mr. Saul unconsciously voiced a world's perplexity when he said to Lord Brecon, "How strange it seems that people should *suffer* for doing their duty?" Then he added, a little uneasily, and half to himself; ". . . it is, of course, one of the many things which we shall understand *some day*."

CHAPTER XI

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Upon the further side of every cloud
The sun is shining;
So turn thy darkest clouds about
And view their silver lining.

—*Anon.*

And now for a time Lady Cecil made good progress, and Mr. Saul, who was obliged to return to his parish, left her with a rapidly growing hope that very soon he would be able to take her away as his wife for a quiet change. He decided that they would go somewhere, quite removed from the scene of her accident and subsequent illness. Already plans were being discussed, and it was settled that he should return to Invergach in a fortnight to make definite arrangements for the journey.

During that fortnight Robert was very busy setting his house in order and preparing for his bride. Every moment that he could spare from his parish duties he devoted to the careful arrangement of her rooms. Both bedroom and boudoir must have a sunny aspect, as the doctors considered warmth of the utmost importance. This could only be obtained by carrying out various structural alterations in the house, for a window must be opened to the west and a doorway cut between the two rooms.

This was done; and now Mr. Saul was taking a last look round before starting for the North. He was

almost satisfied. That Ilkley couch was light and easily moved about at the whim of an invalid, and, please God, it would not be needed long. Once he could call Cecil his wife, and be free to watch over her from morning till night, she would soon be her bright strong self again. He wished that her letters told him more about her health—she scarcely referred to it when writing—but of course no news was good news, and to-morrow he would see for himself how much strength she had gained during these two weeks.

But the following evening, when he sat by Lady Cecil's side and told her of all that he had done to make their future home bright and acceptable to her, he gradually became aware that she was scarcely answering his joyous talk. He now observed that her face had grown still and white. She had not, he knew, come down until his arrival just before dinner, and yet already she seemed listless and weary. Anxiously he asked if he could do anything for her, or would she like him to leave her for a time, in order that she might rest?

"Robert," Cecil Gwynne spoke gravely, "you do not know that Mr. Huntly came down again yesterday. Listen, dear," and she placed her hand on his, "I would not write this, especially as you were coming to-day. It seemed better to tell you myself." But she did not tell him; instead, her face grew whiter and more stern than he had ever seen it.

"What have you to tell me?" Robert asked, and his voice was a little hushed.

For a moment Cecil could not answer, her face was pitiful in its pain, and her hand held her lover's more tightly than she knew.

At last she spoke. "My darling, don't you understand? . . . I can never marry you."

"You *shall* marry me, I swear it," and Robert Saul knelt by her side and, with a touch of perfect tenderness, lifted her until she rested upon his arms. "I do not care," he added impetuously, "what twenty doctors say. We will be married at once, and I will nurse you back to health so quickly, dear, once I can be always with you to guard you all day long."

But Cecil did not answer his passionate protest, and seeing that she could not command her voice, nor keep back the sobs which now shook her weakened frame, Robert raised her in his arms and carried her to her room. His magnificent strength made light of the burden, and he moved easily up the stairs, not pausing until he gently rested her upon her couch. There he bade her good-night and left her in her aunt's watchful care.

It was long before he himself retired, and, when he did at last seek his bed, sleep was still far from him; nor did he obtain more than a few hours' broken rest, from which he awoke quite unrefreshed.

On the morrow, Lady Cecil was too ill to leave her room, and, after a long hour's talk with her brother, Robert Saul was obliged to admit that marriage was for Cecil Gwynne a present impossibility.

"The doctors," Lord Brecon explained to him, "had been quite mistaken in their first diagnosis of the case. They had now discovered further injury, which rendered all hope of a perfect recovery futile; still they thought that, with care and by always wintering in a warm climate, she might live for many years."

"Will she suffer?" Robert asked abruptly.

Lord Brecon turned to the window, and avoided his companion's eye.

"Yes," he answered briefly.

"Not always! you cannot mean that?" Robert's protest was hot and vehement.

"Always, I am afraid;" the Earl replied, "though naturally, we shall take all possible precautions. We shall move her to the South of France before the damp autumn days set in, thus avoiding the risk of any further complications such as sciatica or rheumatism."

"I will not believe it!" Mr. Saul declared passionately. "There must be other doctors, cleverer men—men who know their business! Let them be called in consultation."

"By all means," Lord Brecon agreed, "of course we will leave no stone unturned."

But the summer wore slowly on and brought no lifting of the cloud to the household at the Castle. Gradually even Mr. Saul lost heart, for the best advice had been obtained—more than one medical man of great repute had been summoned from London. Each expressed an opinion which, though widely differing in detail, yet agreed upon the one point, namely, that Lady Cecil Gwynne would never walk again; more—that she would in all probability suffer increasingly as the years went on. They did not, of course, commit themselves to the expression of this opinion without a struggle, but had recourse to indefinite generalities, until pressed into a corner by Mr. Saul, who always insisted upon his right to be present with Lord Brecon

and Miss Beresford at the interviews which were held in the library after the consultations.

Gradually those who loved Cecil Gwynne gave up all hope of her recovery, but still Robert Saul would not accept the release which she urged upon him; for his engagement gave him the right to do all that the most devoted care could accomplish to lift her awful burden. He saw that God had, in His inscrutable wisdom, suddenly called upon his child to bear a weight of pain and weariness which taxed all her powers of self-control. At least, that was how it seemed to him. No doubt God knew best, and he and Cecil must of course resign themselves to His will.

One week, late in that summer, the move abroad was accomplished. Mercifully the horror of the long and tedious journey was somewhat mitigated by a lavish expenditure of money. More than once, however, Mr. Saul, remembering that there were men and women in his parish who also needed this change of climate but whose scanty means made all thought of such a thing impossible, asked himself why one child of the same Father must remain the long winter through in the unkind atmosphere of the London fog; while another was tenderly carried South and luxuriously cared for in every way. How fervently, nevertheless, he thanked God that the woman he loved could be saved the misery of the fog-laden English days!

Once during that winter, after the stress of his Christmas work was over, Robert spent a week with Miss Beresford and Lady Cecil at Genoa. But upon his return, friends exclaimed at his haggard appearance; and indeed he told himself that he would never again willingly pass through an experience such as

that had been. Time after time during those few days he had abruptly left Cecil's side, unable to bear the sight of her hopeless pain, so quietly and bravely endured. For the most part she never spoke of her wrecked life, but he was forced into a reluctant admission, made only to his own heart, that the sweetness of her nature was becoming a little marred, as month after month brought with it a heavier burden still to bear. Once, though only once, while trying to ease her pain, Cecil had addressed him quite irritably, but many times she had shown herself to be unobservant of his little acts of kindness. He had not minded, for he knew that he himself would have borne a trial such as hers with far less patience than she displayed; but it perplexed as well as grieved him, that the chastening hand of God should apparently lead to the deterioration of a noble nature, instead of uplifting it to a higher refinement. Sadly he reflected that sickness very often did have this lowering effect, more often than not, in fact: but of course all suffering was sent for some good purpose. In this instance they had done all that mortal man could do to cure it, and had failed. Nothing now remained, therefore, except quietly to resign themselves to the will of God, the all-wise Father, who evidently did not see fit to lift this heavy burden from His child. Mr. Saul could not help regretting that Cecil's sweet nature should be thus warped and twisted by a trial which surely ought to teach her patient resignation. He could not understand it; and wearily, he classed it with those things, the number of which seemed to increase daily during this period of his life, which the world regards as things not to be understood!

Yet surely it was strange that a man like Robert Saul should have been content thus to shelve a problem dealing with the eternal welfare of mankind. For he was wont, when faced by that which he did not comprehend, steadily to think the matter out, and he would usually wrestle with a knotty problem, whether scientific or economic, until it yielded to his powerful intellect and purposeful toil. But in the matter of ethics he was weighed down—though he did not know it—by that universal mental lethargy, which "healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." It is so much easier, it would seem, for man to accuse the Great First Cause of being the author of all that goes wrong than for him to bestir himself and obey the promptings of the divine energy which saith, "Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."

CHAPTER XII

DERELICT

There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not,
And the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened.
—*Longfellow.*

Many months had passed since Lady Cecil Gwynne had been brought to Italy, but the climate had not restored her to health, though no doubt the sunshine had made her lot seem a little less unbearable. Lord Brecon and his aunt had moved her from place to place, in the hope that constant change of scene might lift the weariness of spirit which now seemed to possess the stricken girl. But soon even a short drive became too arduous an undertaking to be calmly faced by the invalid, whose pain grew steadily worse as time wore on. So Mr. Saul had come over upon a short holiday, and he and Lord Brecon had scoured the most beautiful parts of the Riviera together, looking for suitable winter quarters in which to establish Miss Beresford and her charge.

But Lady Cecil was not easy to please in this matter. Her bright nature was, for the time being, completely overshadowed, and nothing that those around her could do seemed to satisfy her ever-changing whim. Indeed

the once gentle, self-possessed girl appeared now to be transformed, as though by some evil spirit, into a fretful and unreasoning creature who made no attempt to control her environment but allowed herself to be the sport of every little circumstance.

At times it was almost more than Robert Saul could bear to see her thus. He had been accustomed to regard her as a dignified woman of the world and had never supposed that she could behave ungraciously or ungratefully to anyone; much less so to those who spent the greater part of their time in the endeavour to happify her life.

At last their search was successful, and before Christmas the two ladies were established in a beautiful old palace standing high among the orange groves. The impoverished owner was glad enough to accept the liberal terms offered by the luxurious English *milord;* and so the palace and its lovely old gardens were secured by Lord Brecon for a year, and it was decided that the two ladies should use it as a *pied-à-terre* during their sojourn abroad.

They had been installed in it for some months when Lady Margaret Courcy joined her young cousin, thus releasing Miss Beresford for a time from the labour of love which the unselfish little woman had so cheerfully fulfilled for nearly two years.

One beautiful day in early spring, when the cloudless sky was aglow with sunlight, Lady Cecil Gwynne lay alone in the great hall. At first she scarcely moved, but remained almost still, with her eyes closed. After a time, however, she turned wearily upon her side, and gazed gloomily out upon the terraces which stretched away in a gorgeous perspective of colour,

right down to the edge of the Bay. Everything seemed to bloom luxuriantly in this sunny land, and the garden was radiant with its wealth of flowers. Where Cecil Gwynne lay, however, it was cool and intensely quiet. Her couch, placed within the great doors, was sheltered from the sun by the marble pillars which headed the broad white steps. These led down into the garden, only ending by the water side.

To-day, the scent of the orange blossom and gardenia almost oppressed the air and reminded the sick girl, hopelessly chained by disease to her couch, that she had seen bud, blossom and fruit come and go since she left England in search of health, but not once had she been able to walk, even a few yards, to pluck flower or fruit for herself. Always must she depend upon others, and this dependence so fretted her that she told herself often that it was a burden too great to bear. Thus her natural love of an active life rebelled fiercely against her enforced inactivity, and she asked herself again, as she had done many times since that fatal day, why this thing had come upon her?

As Cecil Gwynne mused upon her hopeless state, a shadow fell across the whiteness of the marble colonnade, and Lady Margaret Courcy's voice addressed her, commenting upon the beauty of the walk from which she had just returned.

The next moment she blamed herself for the thoughtless speech, for she knew that, in all the weeks that had passed since her arrival, Cecil had not felt able even to drive through the grounds which surrounded the old palace.

Very kindly Lady Margaret now bent over her cousin and arranged her pillow, and as she did so Cecil, though less observant of others than in the days of her strength, yet noticed that her cousin's manner was, if possible, more quiet than usual.

"Cecil!" Lady Margaret spoke gravely as she seated herself beside the couch, "I have decided to tell you something which I think may help you to bear your pain better, for it will show you, dear," and now the elder woman's voice was very gentle, "that there are worse things to be carried through life than even a shattered body!"

She paused and looked away from her cousin right across the blue water which scintillated in the sunlight as she continued; "The story of a wrecked soul —a true story of which the world knows nothing, and of which I only speak to you now, because it seems that you are in danger of not realising all that life still holds for you."

Lady Margarget paused a moment. This that she meant to do was not easy of performance, and for an instant she faltered. But a glance at her young cousin's weary face decided her to lift the stone from the sepulchre of the past. She did not look at the sick girl, however, as she told her tale, but turning a little she leant her head back against the cool marble pillar and gazed steadily westward, where the sun made glorious play upon fleecy clouds and distant mountain slopes.

Cecil was surprised into an unusual interest by her cousin's attitude, and it seemed to her a long time before Lady Margaret spoke again.

"It was just a year before the death of my mother, and I was barely eighteen," Margaret Courcy resumed,

"when our Rector at Chiltern took a long holiday, and a man, whose surname is not important in this narrative, took his place for six months. I had, as you know, been very strictly brought up and had been allowed to associate with but a few outside the family circle. Philip was quite the most remarkable man that I had ever met, and he satisfied the need, which I had felt for some time, of an intellectual companion. My father at that time was much away, and my mother cared for nothing but her model farm and the welfare of the tenantry. She took a great fancy to Philip, and he was constantly at the Hall, consulting upon parochial matters, till it became an established custom for him to stay to tea. Never once, however, did my mother leave us alone even for a moment; not because it would have entered her head that we could care for each other, but her social views were old-fashioned in the extreme, and she considered that unmarried girls should remain at all times beneath the shadow of a parent's wing. Her own conversation with Philip over, she took very little notice of us, and seemed content that we should enjoy long uninterrupted talks, while she wrote her letters or busied herself with the copying of an old tapestry. She was an expert at this fine needlework, and it quite absorbed her attention, whenever she engaged upon it. So it was that Philip and I learned to know each other well, and I was not unprepared for the question which he at length found an opportunity of formally putting to me. One day, while we were all walking in the Park, my mother rested for a few moments, and I obeyed the compelling look which Philip threw at me and strolled on for a few hundred yards with him, until the trees of a small coppice partially hid us from her view.

"Five minutes later, I had promised that, come what might, I would be his wife, and I wanted then and there to inform my mother of our engagement; but my lover counselled delay. He wished, he said, to wait until my father returned from Russia: he would prefer himself to put the matter before the Duke. I never for a moment doubted the final issue, for I intended to marry Philip, or to die unmarried.

"But the very day before my father's expected return from Russia, Philip astounded me by boldly preferring a request, in my mother's presence, that I would walk a little way in the Park with him. I believe that my mother was too amazed to dissent. It would have made no difference had she done so, for I should have disobeyed *her*, rather than the look of desperate misery in my lover's eyes. So, braving her certain displeasure, I immediately accompanied Philip out into the grounds. Ten minutes later we stood together in the now snow-bound coppice—alone, for the second time only in our lives. I believe that Philip suffered then as much as such a man can suffer, while he told me, in a few miserable halting words that he could never marry me; told me that before we had ever met he had bound himself by vows, which he dared not cut asunder, to the life of a celibate.

"At first, it seemed to me, that either he or I was surely mad, but, when I understood him, my heart seemed to turn to ice and my blood to leap and rush through my veins as though on fire. What I said I hardly knew at the time, enough at any rate to send him speechless from my presence. I remember nothing distinctly until my mother touched me upon the arm and asked me if I were ill. Then I raised my

head and laughed so loud that terrified she led me to the house. It was believed that the bitter cold had caught me unawares, for when leaving the house with Philip, I had stayed for neither hat nor wrap. Many weeks I lay between life and death, my limbs fettered by rheumatic fever and my brain bewildered by a hundred wildest dreams. However, my youth and strength brought me through, but during my convalescence I asked myself how I should live the life before me? It was not only that Philip had killed my faith in him. He had done far worse than that! Though I was only eighteen my religion was already the dominant feature of my life; I believed implicity in the Apostolic succession, and therefore I had believed and accepted absolutely every word that Philip's tongue had voiced, and often he used to speak of the fundamental necessity of *truth* in all religion. I had listened enrapt as, Sunday after Sunday, he preached to our village congregation of the beauty of holiness; I believe now that my love, combined with my ignorance, exalted him at times into something far above the ordinary man. His beautiful ascetic face and perfect intonation lent a great charm to his rendering of the service. I judged the Church by him and, with the simplicity of a child, I accepted him as the impersonation of truth.

"You can imagine what a revulsion necessarily took place when I found that, from the very first, he had been guilty of deception. I was very young and very proud, and this discovery completely annihilated my faith in man and filled me with distrust of the organisation, of which Philip was a minister. Later, however, I saw that it was unjust to judge the many by the one.

"From that day to this I have searched and searched for peace, but I find none. I find myself compelled to believe in a great creative and controlling power, who appears to me to act with less consistency and to show less love towards his children than I would to a dumb creature in my care. And yet,"—Lady Margaret spoke wistfully now, and the hard lines about her mouth softened as her lips trembled slightly—"and yet, I am so hungering for Truth, so longing to believe in a God of love, that I would fain, even now, after all my years of weary search, be told that the mistake lies in myself—if so be, I can thus learn how to rectify it."

As Margaret Courcy ceased speaking her voice dropped wearily, and Lady Cecil caught her cousin's hand in both her own.

"Oh, Margaret!" she said, "what you have suffered! I would rather die," she added vehemently, "than know Robert other than he is."

Lady Margaret rose and kissed the girl softly on the forehead. "My story lies safe in your keeping, Cecil; see that it never leaves your lips. The unshrouding of my dead has been no easy task, but if it can help the living, I am glad to have unbound the cords that held the past so close within my heart. Tell me, Cecil,"—she added rather piteously—"does *your* religion help you, dear? So often I have watched the good ones of this earth fret and rattle in their chains! I do not understand it. Why does sorrow warp and narrow the mentality of man? Why does sickness blemish the character instead of sanctifying it, if, as the Church teaches, it comes from God?"

"Why am I more selfish now than formerly, more

hard and cold? capricious instead of reasonable?" Cecil Gwynne broke in passionately. "I do not understand it either, Margaret. I have prayed for patience night and day; but, oh! it must come quickly, or I too shall lose my faith in God, if not in man." And the girl turned gloomily away and spoke no more for many hours.

After a time Lady Margaret Courcy rose and walked slowly up and down the great hall; and as she watched her Cecil Gwynne did not wonder that a priest had perjured his soul to win her.

Though the years had passed since then, Margaret Courcy was still the most beautiful woman in London. Tall, and with a carriage that many a queen had envied, she passed through life with a serene and stately grace. To-day, with undulating grace, she paced the hall from end to end; now pausing beneath a slender palm with its drooping plume of green, now arresting her steps between the marble pillars which foiled and framed her dark, but brilliant, beauty between their lines of glistening white. Cecil looked at her and, looking, thought that surely time had passed her by, leaving her classic beauty quite untouched. She now understood for the first time that it was this wound, received in early youth, which had turned her cousin's heart to stone, transforming her into a woman full grown before ever she had bent her knee before her sovereign.

While still very young, the Lady Margaret Courcy had accompanied the Duke, her father, into the presence of kings and princes and everywhere had been the courted of all courtiers, so alluring men by her loveliness of face and form that they dared to brave

the cold disdain, which made its home within her eyes and claimed for its very own the smile upon her lips. But always her answer had been the same—she loved no man and would never marry where she did not love.

This much Cecil Gwynne had known, as did all their world, but of her cousin's inner life she had, until that hour, known no more than did the young courtier who bent before the Lady Margaret at his first court ball and who, because he was so young and as yet almost unspotted by the world, was sure to win from her a smile less cold than did the elder men who, standing by, bent low as well—men who, when bending, stirred carelessly the orders upon their breasts—jewels too lightly won to be aught but lightly worn.

That evening the cousins talked long and earnestly, and later, when Margaret Courcy sat alone in her room, she sighed wearily more than once and asked herself sadly, what was the object of it all? To what end had *she* come into the world? For what reason was Cecil's young life—aye, and that of many another—turned suddenly into a burden so great as this? a burden so great that those who loved them best could find it in their hearts to pray that death might hasten his silent step and so release them from the bondage of their hourly pain? But here thought gave pause as Margaret, startled, asked herself; "And what then? what beyond the grave?" Then answering thought, all befogged by the misty earth-clouds of the past, made slow reply; "Beyond the grave there is nothing certain, save a great uncertainty!"

CHAPTER XIII

"MAN, WHOSE BREATH IS IN HIS NOSTRILS"

Negation is a barren wilderness.
—*J. Crichton Brown.*

A FEW days after her intimate talk with her cousin, Lady Cecil Gwynne wrote to Mr. Saul—a long letter, definitely breaking off their engagement. She wrote lovingly, but quite decidedly. It was the least egotistical letter that she had written to her lover for a long time, and it touched him deeply. His reply was characteristic of the man's impulsive nature. He sent a swift message over land and sea informing Lady Cecil that he was starting by that morning's mail for Italy.

Next evening, as he knelt beside her couch and pleaded that she would reconsider her decision, his fellow-workers would scarcely have recognised Robert Saul as the man whom they were accustomed to see take all obstacles in his stride. Often he seemed to those who watched him to be riding for a fall, but invariably his courage and unswerving determination landed him safely upon the far side, while other men were left behind, still cautiously negotiating the leap from a less difficult point.

To-night, the soft brightness of the moon shed a light, more gentle though nearly as clear as day, full

upon Mr. Saul's face, and the rugged lines seemed to be smoothed away by the tender thought which entirely controlled him.

Very kindly he held Cecil's almost nerveless hands within his large strong grasp, and very gently he at last consented to annul his engagement, but only for a year.

"You have so often spoken like this of late," he said, "that I am compelled to obey you and take my dismissal with what grace I may, but, my dear," and he smiled as he quietly drew her head upon his shoulder, "I wonder why you do it! You surely know that upon the very day the year is up I shall stand beside you and renew the contract. Why waste a year, beloved?" he pleaded, "you know that I shall always love you, and *you alone!* You know that I could never marry any other woman! Why waste a precious year? Marry me to-morrow, Cecil," he added more passionately, "and prove me, dear, if I be not the tenderest, kindest nurse that ever a woman had!"

With his arms about her, wooing her by their strong support, Cecil yet fought and won the battle between duty and desire. It was hard indeed to forego the only thing that seemingly could mitigate her lot, but she remembered—what Robert at the moment did not remember—that his work called him to a more strenuous life than could be wrought out beside a woman's chair.

Reminded of this, Mr. Saul for an instant stood almost doubtful, but immediately he gave his steadfast answer back.

"My parish can doubtless be better managed by

a better man, and there is work for God's servants everywhere. Is the world not wide, and is there not sin upon which to wage war from north to south, from east to west? As well work out the great problem of good and evil here in the sunny South with you to help me, as in the colder North, where you cannot be beside me."

But Cecil would not have it so. Should he still wish it a year hence, they might then renew the discussion. The celebrated continental doctors, from whose treatment, combined with the climate of the Mediterranean, they had all hoped so much, had, however, that week told Lady Margaret Courcy that her cousin's fate was sealed, and Cecil insisted that she would not tie Robert's vigorous manhood to her helpless state.

Softly Robert kissed her tears away, soothing her gently as a mother tenderly caresses a tired child, when nursing it to sleep. Then he left her with Margaret Courcy, and walked out into the silent night, there to battle with a future which stretched out in endless view before his sorrowful imagination.

To-night, Cecil had been like her own sweet self, brave and thoughtful for the welfare of another, keeping her own deep sorrow in the background. But Robert knew that the effort had been a supreme one, and that probably upon the morrow all her sweetness would be submerged once more by the turbulent waves of bodily suffering. Oh, the pity of it! that a nature once so lovable and lovely—aye, a character of such rich promise—should now be able to rise only when called upon to meet a great occasion, letting for the most part the daily stress of life's little things govern

it completely, thus filling the moral atmosphere around with the darkness of perpetual discord.

As Mr. Saul walked upon the moonlit shore, he turned and stood for a while gazing at the silver sea. It rose and fell with a placid movement, gently swelling its way over the white sands and softly lapping the base of the ink-black rocks. And the golden moon smiled gravely upon the scene but brought no comfort to the sorrowing man, who stood with face turned upwards, silently petitioning for light upon the rugged path of life.

For hours Robert Saul remained there, and that night he vowed, again and again, that come what might, he would love and shelter Cecil Gwynne as much as in him lay, and this, as long as they both should live.

To remain in London within easy reach of her and yet forbidden to see her, did not at the moment seem possible to Mr. Saul. He was in that condition of mind which made the Babylonian turmoil of the city's teeming need abhorrent to him. Upon every side, look where he would, he saw the same dead level of failure, and to-night it made him sick at heart. Noble men and loving women were, he knew, overworking themselves hourly—some into a premature old age, some into a state of mental exhaustion, and some even literally to death—in the endeavour to save a world from sin, and with what result? With all their unselfish toil, with all their liberal expenditure of money and of life, had they done more than touch the fringe of that seething sin which festers the heart of heathen London?

Along there by the quiet sea, with only the calm of the still night about him, Mr. Saul confessed to him-

self that *because* the world loves its sin so well, something—what he knew not—but something with a power as yet untried, must arise in order to stem the downward trend of man's morality.

As the night wore slowly on, the resolve to leave England for a time formed itself within his mind. For this coming year, at any rate, he would go to some distant land, as far as might be from any city's crowded need, and there renew his mental energy.

The early dawn was creeping up from the east as he turned his steps homeward. Thick clouds were drifting overhead, for the bright moonlight had given place to an uncertain shade that brooded over the land and shrouded olive trees and palms alike in nameless robes of shadow. The wooded landscape was thus peopled with uncertain forms, which changed continually as his vision neared them, even as does the background of a misty dream.

And how was Cecil spending the long hours of that night, during which Robert schooled himself to meet the farewell which lay before them both upon the morrow? For her, the night was always a period of suffering such as can be understood only by those who have endured a like torture. Days of enforced inactivity were followed by nights of restless misery; hour after hour she lay awake, her distress seeming the greater because of the quiet rest enjoyed by others.

To-night, sleep was far indeed from her pillow, but she dared not take the drug which lay ready to her hand. Every dose was less efficacious and, to be of use, must be continually increased. For weeks she had found it impossible to sleep without taking the narcotic. How often she had vowed that she would

not take it! Sometimes, by sheer force of will, she succeeded in living the night through without its aid; but, alas! how often had she been defeated by the mental agony of insomnia, coupled with the presence of severe physical pain. To-night, she read again, for the twentieth time since Margaret Courcy had left her, the instruction upon the bottle which the nurse had placed close to her hand, "To be taken if restless at night."

The words were a perpetual invitation to unrest, a perpetual suggestion of relief—relief of a purely temporary nature she knew, and carrying in its train the inevitable reaction upon the morrow. Now for some hours the girl courted repose by every wile of which she found herself the mistress; but in vain. The day had been a trying one, and the future years stared her in the face with a cruel grimness. Lady Cecil had of late acquired the habit, which usually goes hand in hand with chronic illness, of living in the future and the past; thus she lived a year in a day and was rapidly losing all sense of youth.

Once Robert had gently reminded her that we are told to "take no thought for the morrow," but, even as he spoke, he realised that he knew no one who obeyed the Master's command, unless it were those of tenderest age and gentlest nature among children.

As Cecil Gwynne now tossed from side to side, she moaned in her stress of mind, and asked herself why the life which she had meant to live for others had been rendered useless by her God? Why also should Robert suffer with her? Reflecting, she realised that the sickness of the one usually meant the suffering of the many: whether it were the busy mother of a

family, or the bread-winner for many hungry mouths, mattered not. How could it be a just decree that punished the helpless brood dependent upon the parent strength, sometimes for its very life? But of what avail to ask this question? Death would come to all in time and, coming, would bring to all alike the solution of the problem of their being. Meanwhile, life must be borne as best it might be and death awaited with what patience each sufferer could command! At last, worn out with these perplexing thoughts, the girl could bear the lonely night hours no longer and, reaching for the draught, she sought a troubled rest—a rest all unworthy of the name, because all too short and fitful to refresh or soothe.

As the weary months slowly followed the one upon the other, she asked herself again and again those weighty questions to which, sooner or later, all must seek an answer:—If God is Love, why does He send to His children the grievous burden of sickness and death? Does He slay the very child to whom He has given birth? or, being Almighty, does He authorise or permit some other power so to do? And what meant Jesus by all that he said and did? When healing the sick, was he undoing the work of Him who sent him? or was he releasing those "Whom *Satan* hath bound"? When raising the dead was he reversing the will of God, or, by restoring that which to human vision seemed lost, was he showing to men the "glory of God"—the righteousness of life and the unrighteousness of its opposite, death?

Cecil Gwynne did not, however, carry the question thus far. Indeed she seldom carried any question far, for her once clear thought was often now benumbed;

but slowly a conviction was borne in upon her, and it brought her closer to God than she had ever been before. This hell in which she lived! it was not of His making, and so she would pray day and night to be released from it. She would *not* resign herself to this wasted existence; above all, she would not hold God responsible for it. Thus she thought, and thus she prayed in her better moments; but then would come days all clouded with pain, and she would sink beneath the weight of that theology which holds God guilty of all that men fail to comprehend.

But running through even her darkest hours was a desire to escape from the sickness that imprisoned her, and often now her thought recurred to a certain course, of which many friends had spoken, but which she had not hitherto seriously contemplated, chiefly because she found it impossible to believe that *anything* could aid one in such a hopeless condition as herself. Now, however, with a curious persistence this one untried remedy presented itself to her, until finally she decided to consult her brother about the matter; and she was actually disappointed when he refused to give it any serious consideration, deeming it both useless and absurd to try anything of the kind. He knew nothing of Christian Science, but he pronounced it fit only for the consideration of hysterical women or nervous men; and so for a time Cecil Gwynne, too weak to argue, sank into a state of hopeless apathy, leaving the mistake of man to run its course.

CHAPTER XIV

ANGOLA*

Whatever day
Makes man a slave takes half his worth away.
—*Pope.*

It was a week since Mr. Saul had so reluctantly taken farewell of Lady Cecil Gwynne, and he was now making his final arrangements preparatory to leaving England for a year. His friends and acquaintances all thought him mistaken and wondered that any such sudden freak should rule a man like Robert Saul. Then a whisper of his love story found its way about, and men marvelled still more, for they had not supposed that the woman lived who could cause any alteration in the plan of Mr. Saul's life! But only one friend ever spoke to him on the subject, and that was Lord Brecon. He himself was of all men the least ambitious, but he had a great admiration for Mr. Saul's remarkable powers of mind and also for his splendid vitality; and it seemed to him that the man was sacrificing the certainty of a great future to a passing phase, born of a disappointment which would have been more quickly outgrown had he remained at his post in the crowded capital.

"'Out of sight,' was," he reminded Robert, "'out

* This chapter is founded upon information, received personally from an English missionary and published in the "Illustrated Missionary News," and from "A Modern Slavery," by Nevinson.

of mind.'" For a rising man to leave England when, should he remain, he had the certainty of preferment before him, was surely an act of supreme folly.

Mr. Saul listened to his friend courteously, but he hardly heard what he said. It was not his habit to alter his decision at the suggestion of anyone. The boy had, in his case, undoubtedly fathered the man. Years ago nurse, parent and schoolmasters had alike called him obstinate, and the characteristic was his still, though there were not many people sufficiently intimate with him to use that same bald word now. With the passing of years he had acquired that habit of mind which rather prides itself upon what the world, with superficial hurry, designates as firmness: and he now left England, notwithstanding all that Lord Brecon urged to the contrary.

On his arrival in Angola he made arrangements almost immediately with a missionary, whom he chanced to meet upon landing, to join him in a journey up country. It was his intention to begin a crusade against the fiendish cruelty which he heard was daily practised upon the helpless negroes in the interior; and a week after he reached Africa he started upon his mission.

To-day, the flat country for miles around appeared to be asleep; not a human being stirred, and even the animals were seemingly oppressed by the heat and were maintaining an unusual silence. The day was intensely hot, and a shimmering mist hung over the landscape. The great leaves of the banana and plantain trees, beribboned by a recent gale, now hung motionless, and Mr. Saul and his new acquaintance agreed that they must at once seek the safety of shade and rest.

An hour previously they had landed upon the shore of Cabinda Bay, intending at once to proceed into the interior. The sun, however, was already high in the heavens, and Mr. Saul was too little acclimatised to venture upon a further journey until the cool of the evening. The two men therefore entered a little bungalow close to the landing stage, and it was with a sigh of relief that Robert Saul threw himself full length upon the bare boards of the verandah, which ran round three sides of the tiny factory. This little white building, with its green jalousies, formed a well-known landmark for miles around. After a short period, during which he vainly endeavoured to obtain a little rest, Mr. Saul resigned himself to the discomfort of his position, and rather suddenly fell asleep in spite of the army of mosquitoes which quickly recognised the fresh blood and sought it hungrily. Scarcely half an hour had passed, however, before he awoke to the dim realisation of something unpleasant. Rousing, he leant upon one elbow and gazed across the rough track, trodden by the bare feet of the blacks into some semblance of a road. There he saw that a complete change had come over the lethargic scene since he had entered the factory but a short while since.

The little store which adjoined it was still closed, but already gangs of people had come in from the interior, their number having been increased *en route* by many stragglers—natives who had attached themselves to their more prosperous brothers in the hope of earning a bottle of rum by carrying the palm kernels and other native produce, when the way became rough and the sun more powerful. It was the noisy chatter of these blacks that had aroused Mr. Saul, for there

were numbers round the verandah, and they were all awaiting with much impatience the arrival of the white man.

Presently the door of the store was unlocked from within, and a greedy rush was made by the natives, each desiring to be the first to barter his produce for rum.

Three hours later, Mr. Saul turned with sorrow and disgust from the scene before him. Trade had, alas! been brisk, and now not a native was left upon his feet. Some lay prostrate under the cocoa-nut palms, too drunk to resent the pilfering hand which stole towards the last half-bottle of rum that had slipped from the nerveless fingers: others snored the hours away in besotted slumber, lying huddled just where the cursed devil, drink, had thrown them: others, whose share of the spoil had been less, were drunk also, but not helplessly so. These quarrelled uproariously, mingling their native dialect with profane cries in another language—cries in which they appealed to the white man's fetish to save them from some fancied foe—one man taking out an image of the Virgin Mother and thrusting it before the face of his contentious neighbour, while another attempted to balance himself upon his knees before an image of the Saviour and with horrible, drunken babbling implored vengeance upon his brother.

Filled with disgust and indignation, Mr. Saul leaped from the low verandah and, with one sweep of his powerful arm, hurled the miserable creature out of his path. Stooping, he lifted the clay image, which had for him a sanctity utterly incomprehensible to its owner even when sober, and, carrying it into the

house, he sought his friend. He found him in the small back room to which he had retired upon their arrival. Mr. Martin was just drawing on his white drill coat and preparing to mix himself a cool drink of lime juice and tonic water.

The sight of Mr. Saul's face, however, arrested his action. "What is it?" he asked, surprised.

"Blasphemy and bestiality," Mr. Saul replied bitterly. "Is this how the white man civilises his black brother?" he added passionately, and as he spoke, he drew Mr. Martin into the open doorway from which spot the pandemonium outside could be seen and heard.

A moment later the young trader joined them. "I have had a good day," he said complacently, "I have passed a hundred and eighty gallons of rum."

"To-day is Sunday," Mr. Saul remarked coldly: "Is this a fair specimen of your Sundays here?"

"It is a fair specimen of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year," the man answered calmly. "Rum is the thing that pays here, for not only do we barter with it, but the wages of workmen are usually paid in it."

Angry and sick at heart, Mr. Saul turned away. He had left England hoping to rest awhile from the perpetual conflict with vice, but here he found degradation as deep and pitiful. What of the man beside him—a young Englishman apparently of good birth and education, who was, it seemed, content to spend his best years in deliberately holding out, with both hands, ruin to a race too ignorant to recognise as such the snares which were being wound around it?

That evening the two clergymen started upon their further journey into the interior, and from his com-

panion Robert Saul heard much that shocked him deeply.

Later, when he came across the natives much further inland, he forced this question home upon his thought, "Has Christianity, as it has been taught in Angola, elevated the race?" For here, in the interior, he found the native religion was the same as that of other Basota tribes, and he could not deny that, heathen though they were, the depravity was less marked up in the interior than upon the coast, where their religion was unworthy to bear the name of Christ, being no more than a mixed jumble of idolatry and superstition without a particle of spiritual understanding.

One day, while returning to the coast, chance led Mr. Saul across the route used by the traders when carrying off their victims to the West Coast. That the slave trade was actively carried on in the vast district, roughly described as the interior of Central Africa, he knew. Upon the day of which I write, however, he was for the first time brought face to face with it and saw before him, unmasked and naked in its awful pain, "Africa's open sore"; and it seemed to Robert Saul that he heard his brother's blood crying unto him from the ground and speaking loudly of work left undone. Changing his plans upon the instant, he turned and followed the road to Bibé, saying to himself that he would dive to the depth of this horrible thing and thus be justified in preaching against it. That journey he never forgot. He met thousands of slaves, shackled and lashed together with leather thongs, each carrying a heavy burden above their shackles. Thus they were driven like cattle, and upon inquiry he found that never, under any cir-

cumstances, did more than a very small percentage of these wretched exiles arrive at Bibé. He learnt that this traffic in human flesh was carried on practically under the protection of the Portuguese Government. At Bibé the remnant of the traders' stock is sold, many slaves being possessed by the officials, who buy their concubines there. Determined to probe the sore to the bottom, Mr. Saul joined a missionary who proposed to cross the Quanza; but he had grim reason to regret the impulse which had led him to investigate this iniquitous traffic in flesh and blood. Again and again, he was forced to turn away from the sights about his path: again and again, he hastily shut his eyes and bent his head, feeling suddenly sick, as some spectacle abhorrent to the sight met his gaze. Day after day slave gangs passed them: day after day their hearts were wrung by the sight of dead and decomposing bodies by the wayside. Some of the poor creatures had evidently been knocked on the head; others had been hamstrung and left to die. Night after night, more worn out by the horrors of his journey than by the arduous travelling, Mr. Saul laid down upon his camp bed, only to find that restful sleep was utterly out of the question. With sickening reiteration the crack, crack of the slave whip seemed to din in his ears, and twice he started up and rushed out of his tent, sure that he heard again the dull thud of the club upon some poor victim's back.

One night, soon after crossing the Quanza, he dreamed and suffered as he dreamed, for he witnessed once again the saddest sight that he had ever seen—a young and comely girl, shackled and roped, struggling wildly in her chains, mad with grief and pain; now

laughing vacantly, now cringing in terror before the driver's whip, now crying for the loved one who had dropped upon the road! Struggling to aid her, he awoke to find his travelling companion by his side.

"Why, Saul, your cries roused me! you must not let that incident get upon your nerves; it does no good. God grant that one day the civilised world will awaken to its terrible sin of omission; meanwhile, it will not help matters for you to get ill."

Though comforted for a time by a like hope, Mr. Saul had, after his return to England, grown disheartened. So many, upon hearing his recital of that upon which his eyes had looked, had exclaimed sympathetically and theorised not a little and then—had gone to dinner or to dance, seemingly untouched by the woes of a tortured race! Once he thought that he had really made an impression, and in an important direction. About a month after reaching England he had met an old college friend, who, he found, held an appointment upon the staff of a big paper. His friend had listened quietly and had asked many questions, finally promising to "take it up." He made Mr. Saul tell him in detail of the punishment dealt out to the slave, who, courting death in the bush rather than life upon the plantations, should attempt to escape. He had looked horrified, while Mr. Saul described that which he had himself seen, namely, some slaves who, after being severely "palmatared," were extended between four posts fixed in the ground, face downwards, the body just touching a barrel placed in the centre of the posts, and "chocotteed" on the back.

The poor creatures had fainted several times while undergoing the torture, and all the other slaves were

compelled to witness this terrible scene. Afterwards, their bleeding backs were washed with antiseptic, and the irony of the thing had seemed horrible to Mr. Saul —an action which was a disgrace to manhood, whitewashed by an "antiseptic," the product of civilisation! His journalistic friend had drawn from him the fact that the average life of a slave on the plantation is five years; the death rate being very high owing to the pitiless rule of the masters. And then, after all, his friend had put the matter on the shelf until a more convenient season. But Robert Saul could not let the thing rest, and for some time the sights and sounds of that journey in Africa were apt to haunt him when he returned home wearied by a long day's work. For the blackness of man's brutality stood out in his memory, sharply silhouetted against the surrounding brightness of the scene, where torture and wanton murder seemed to desecrate the purity of the tropical sunlight and the fair beauty of nature.

Upon the night of which I have spoken, Mr. Saul lay awake long after his companion had returned to his own tent, and he said to himself wearily that he had made a mistake in coming to Angola.

He had left England, saddened by the power of evil and the seeming impotence of good, and he had thought to find refreshment here, among new scenes and in a less congested atmosphere. But bitter disappointment met him at every turn. Indeed, as month after month went by, the grim fact faced him, that, in this land of fair forest and immense space, sin in foulest form held sway. Vice, less educated perhaps, less subtle, but vice, which (alas! that it should be so) went hand in hand with the advent of the white man, was here, and it lowered

both black and white alike to the degraded plane of animality and hate.

And what of Robert Saul's months of desperate effort and self-sacrificing toil? True, more than once his work had been seriously interfered with by a sharp attack of malaria which even his robust system had failed to throw off completely. But he was not the only worker there. Others, like himself, were despondent as they reviewed their months of apparently fruitless labour, and saw the black sinking lower under his burden of slavery and shame, and worse still, the white man descending from his own estate to the level of the beast. It was therefore with a feeling of relief that Mr. Saul stood one day upon the deck of the homeward bound mail. He had just despatched a cable to Lady Cecil Gwynne apprising her of the date of his return. But of course she knew that date and knew that he would not be one hour late. Not once during the past eleven months had he heard from her, for upon that point she had been firm when they parted. But to a constant nature such as Mr. Saul's a deprivation of this kind could make no difference in the growth of his love, and he believed that Cecil was more necessary to him now than ever before. Her weak and crippled state only called up in him a great desire to wrap her round with his manhood's strength and shield her life as much as in him lay.

Now that his year of waiting drew near to its close, he found himself hungering more consciously for the touch of Cecil's hand and more determined than before that nothing should ever separate them again. He smiled as this thought crossed his mind, for what could separate them now? He had been tried in the

fire and he had stood the test, and he—well—he never had doubted that at the year's end he would stand beside Cecil Gwynne, and marry her as soon as might be. And so that voyage was not an unhappy time for Robert Saul. His impatient nature found it hard to await the first sight of the English shore, but the goal which was always before his mental vision was worth the waiting, and—it was the last time! Nothing could, nothing *should*, ever separate him from Cecil Gwynne again.

Part III

A THREAD OF GOLD IN THE HAND OF GOD

CHAPTER XV

THE MIDNIGHT CALL

As torrents in summer,
Half dried in their channels,
Suddenly rise, though the
Sky is still cloudless
For rain has been falling
Far off at their fountains.

So hearts that are fainting
Grow full to o'erflowing,
And they that behold it
Marvel and know not,
That God at their fountains
Far off has been raining!

—*Longfellow.*

And what of Cecil Gwynne during that year which Robert Saul spent in Africa?

It was New Year's Day. The months had come and gone since she had bidden him a reluctant farewell, and to-day she was wondering how she could have sent him from her side. Lady Margaret Courcy was with her once more, and kind little Miss Beresford too, and the doctors had the day before suggested that they should telegraph for Lord Brecon, who was in London. "Was there danger for her life?" Margaret Courcy had asked. "Ah, no! Milady would live, perhaps for years, but always now she would suffer more and more!"

Cecil was told nothing of this, but she read more than they intended in the grave faces and subdued manner of those about her. That evening she called Margaret Courcy to her and insisted that she should immediately write to Lord Brecon, urging him to obtain for her the help of the one thing which had not yet been tried; nor would she rest until her cousin assured her that the letter had been written and despatched.

But two days later, as she lay in her bed and looked out of the open window across the sea, she prayed that death would hasten his steps, and thanked God the while that Robert Saul was not there to see her torture of soul and body. For that was the awful truth. Longing for the release of death, her soul was yet so torn by doubt and fear, that at one moment she would cry to her God to delay the dread visitant, and the next her teeth would meet in deadly pain, while the dew of agony stood upon her brow and a voiceless cry for deep oblivion would hold her silent and almost still the beating of her heart.

The nurse asked gently if she could do anything for her, but she paid no heed to the soft enquiry. She looked out upon the bright blue of the sky and the deeper blue of the sea and saw that, where the sun kissed the wavelets into smiling beauty, the waters gleamed with white and gold. The brightness of the scene, all eloquent of radiant life, seemed to mock her prisoned limbs, and the living death which bound her where she lay denied all peace to tortured body and troubled mind.

Lady Margaret Courcy, rent asunder by her desire to know the girl at rest and her innumerable doubts

as to whether rest did indeed await her beyond the grave, had but scant comfort to offer. Too true to voice that which she did not fully believe, she was thus forced into a desperate silence as, all through that terrible day, she and Miss Beresford sat by the sick girl's side.

At last the day is almost done: a shadow slants across the wide terrace below, while the setting sun sinks down amid a wealth of crimson, green and gold. The sea, and sky, and distant mountain peak are flooded with a glorious light beyond the pen of man to paint, till suddenly! the heavens and the earth are drenched in blood, as the roseate of the sky takes on a purple hue and a sanguinary shadow creeps over the sea, thus turning its gold to a deep-toned glow. And now the wavelets seem to leap in pain, for slowly across the moving bosom of the flaming deep there steals a harsh whisper of woe, as the sea uprises to slay. Hark! to the shrill laughter of wind kissing wave, as they meet in unholy wedlock! Swift heralds of death and of hell, they but wed as the harlot doth wed, to couple and speed on, to riot and to die. See! deep darkness falls upon the earth, as the heavens are canopied in sudden cloud!

With cruel dread within each heart and fear made manifest upon each face, the silent watchers turn to see a look of speechless horror in the stricken woman's eyes—eyes which now shine dully, like twin fires burning within the shadow of a wild, white face, all beclouded, all befouled, by the fearsome fear of a living death.

Unable any longer to bear the sight of suffering,

which she could not mitigate and which months ago the most powerful opiates had almost failed to relieve, Margaret Courcy left her cousin in the care of Miss Beresford and the nurse and watched the long night through in solitude. But even there, though room and corridor divided them, faint moans still reached her, and she knew that Cecil was being dragged across the rack by the devilish power of pain. Fleeing before the piteous sound, she threw open her window and stood upon the balcony without.

"Dear God!" she cried aloud, "have pity and send her peace! Oh, Death! come quickly and give her rest!" But even as her heart sent forth the cry, a strange new thought checked a repetition of the words and held her dumb. Shocked beyond measure, she asked herself, what had she done? What was it, that suddenly she seemed to herself to be? Surely, in thought she had been guilty of the great offence! Surely, she must in secret brand herself with the brand of Cain!

Moved by a rapid and strong revulsion of feeling, she threw herself upon her knees and prayed a wordless prayer—a prayer mighty in its desperate desire, and strong in the strength of its new-born hope. Now, as she knelt and prayed, the storm without became a holy calm, and from the vast dome above the gentle beams of a sickle moon shed softest light upon earth and sea; while impotent matter, its vain babblings all hushed, lay quiet and quelled by Harmony's breath, thus heeding, as ever earth must, Mind's heavenly law of, "Peace be still!"

Hour after hour Margaret Courcy knelt there, her face upheld towards the quiet sky, the wealth of her

hair and the white of her robe bathed in purest light. Nor did she move when the morning's breeze came over the sea and gently raised the dark tendrils off her brow, as it wound its way caressingly about her form.

As the dawn rose into day, her thought grew fixed to God and Life, till her soul was possessed by a great desire, and a strange new peace controlled her mind. Then, as the brilliant sun arose, her heart uplifted with a heaven-sent prayer, and she asked, in the silence of a wondrous hope, that Cecil should live,—live, and somehow overcome the demon pain; live, and somehow rise above the thraldom of the flesh into newness of life with God.

While Margaret Courcy was keeping her lonely vigil throughout the night, Cecil Gwynne lay in the grip of a deadly terror, worse by far than the fear of death. "I shall go mad!" she cried in her heart. "I shall go mad, if they do not stop this pain!" And now it seemed that two people whispered by her side! The one—her dress was made of glass, her apron of white paper, and her nurse's cap was tall and brown and made, it seemed, of cork; and across her breast was written, in letters large and black and clear, "The DRAUGHT!" The other woman, once beautiful, but twisted now and torn by pain, lay prostrate on the bed beside her. Now, that one all made of glass, bent over that prostrate form and spoke soft words of unconscious blasphemy. "Drink of me, and 'I' will give you rest!"

"Rest!" the woman wailed in piteous bewilderment. "Rest! tell me what is rest? I have forgotten!"

"Rest," and the one of glass bent low beside her; "oh, rest," she said, "is sleep, forgetfulness of pain."

"You never gave me *that*," the other moaned, "for always the devil pain haunts my every dream!"

And now the one of glass bent lower still and turning whispered subtle falsity within the woman's ear.

"Drink!" the whisper seemed to fill the air. "Drink deeper, deeper yet, and I will give you perfect rest from pain—deep oblivion, see!" and a hand all cold and white and fleshless, made of glass—or was it of dead men's bones?—shot out and pointed to the nurse's chair. "See, she sleeps! and she forgot to measure me to-night! See! I am tall and full of that which will still your pain forever and forever! Kiss me, kiss me long; and kissing, drink of me!"

The woman raised her hand to take the cap from off the other's head, when Cecil turned, and turning saw that prostrate woman's face. Was it her own, this ghastly thing beside her—this white wan shadow of the past, torn by pain and twisted into knotted nerves? Is this the face of Cecil Gwynne? God's pity! was she mad? or was this truly Cecil Gwynne? She tried to shout aloud, but her lips were sealed, it seemed! She tried to flee the horrid sight, but her limbs were bound, it seemed! Bound! and were these grave clothes that wound her round and round? Prisoned, helpless, hopeless—almost mad. . . . She lay there muttering in the agony of wild delirium!

And now another form crept up to her, and pitying eyes looked into hers—the face was the face of Robert Saul, but the form was the form of Death! "Drink!" and the voice was the voice of Robert Saul, but the hand held out was the hand of Death.

"Drink, beloved, drink, for I cannot bear to see your pain." Ah—a—a! Whence came that mocking

laughter that raced its way around her bed? or was it her own wild cry for peace?

"P—a—i—n," she muttered, "P—a—i—n!" And now the mocking laughter ceased, for a new form stood beside her bed. New! ah, no! She had seen it oft before, for was she not wedded to its vileness, forever and forever, even until death should them part? A phantom form, its garments made of woe! And across its heart, the signet of despair. She knew it, this phantom form, and knew its name was AGONY! And now it bent beside the bed, and pressed a drill upon her brow and wound it round and round again, right through the temple and the bone; right through the nerve it bored its hellish way, and still the phantom wound it round and on. There! it was fixed and firm, and now it took a white-hot wire and bound it tightly round her spine and left that there. . . . *And still she lived, and still the nurse slept on!* . . . And now he took her in his arms, this phantom form, and nailed her on a cross all made of pain; "To bring you nearer," he whispered softly, "to your God!"

"Ah—a—a!" she said through silent lips, "the way to Heaven is surely paved with hell and seems to darken all my thought of God!"

And still she lived! . . . And still the nurse slept on!

Ha! she knew a way, fool! thrice fool! not to have taken it before!—that precipice, of which her maid had spoken upon a summer day! That precipice! so high above, so deep below, that none could hope to live who leaped from off the brink. *Now! now while the nurse still slept*, she would be up and doing! But softly, silently, or she would be caught and nailed upon the

cross again. Hush! the nurse stirred! No matter, she would hasten and be done, she would flee, quicker! quicker! than any could pursue! Now rushing torrents roared above her head and cruel monsters of the deep dragged her below the wildly raging waves; and now the nurse—or was it some great sea serpent?—bound her round and round with giant cords of fantastic slimy growth. But why were they white, like grave clothes? or was it the sheets upon her bed? Why were they red like bands all made of fire? why? . . . Ah! . . . now the end!

But . . . Margaret was calling to her! Margaret was parting the waters above her head, and now . . . they roared no longer, but lapped softly, softly upon a sunny beach. Dear God! she was at rest at last, for Margaret's strong arms were round her limbs, and Margaret's soft hand guided her head and gently pillowed it upon her breast; and Margaret's voice was calling to her, calling softly, sweetly, as the wild dove cooing calls to its mate in early spring. And now a voice—was it the voice of Margaret?—sang a solemn chant from the days of long ago.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

When came this great and holy calm? Was it born of the song which Margaret Courcy sang?

> "Soft and low, sweet and clear,
> Love's message rose and fell upon the air."

Whence came this sweet sense of rest that stole into her heart and chased the earth-clouds all away?

She did not know; she did not seek to know; she was content to rest, with this sweet angel nestling like a gentle dove upon her breast and loosening, with its touch divine, the fetters which bound her limbs in hell.

> "Soft and low, sweet and clear,
> Love's message rose and swelled upon the air."

And now she slept, and sleeping smiled, as does a healthy child upon its mother's breast.

The Lady Margaret Courcy rose and looked upon her cousin's face, and looking, wondered at its joy. Then walking, as one walks upon the long untrodden way, she passed from room to room, then up a steep and narrow stair and outwards through an arched stone door, until she stood beneath the open sky. Whence, she asked, had come this wondrous calm? As some sweet echo from the past steals into the heart of one to whom the future has for long been blank, and fills it with the fragrance of a long-forgotten joy, she had heard the words she sang, as they fell upon the air; but she had not felt their advent nor voiced them consciously; nor did she yet fully understand from whence they came nor know that they had lain dormant throughout the weary years, until the time of God's appointing. Long ago she had homed within her heart a tiny seed. Now, though she knew it not, the rain had fallen, the sun had shone, and lo!—the flower stood revealed!

There are words, the overflowing rhythm of an eternal harmony, which, seeming to strike roughly upon the unready ear, there rouse discordant thought to active self-assertion, till it cries aloud, "It thun-

ders." Yet the self-same word, at the self-same hour, will sweep softly across the *waiting* heart, and touch it to a strange new strength, waking sweet memories in the receptive mind, attuned to Truth's heavenly call by holy thought and high desire. Thus it was with Margaret Courcy now. She had long been journeying towards that "open door" which no man can shut, and now she stood waiting before Truth's heavenly portal. In time will come to her the further call, and then shall she pass on into that city which "lieth foursquare"—that city which hath "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." And those who tread its streets of gold learn that within these walls there is no night. This New Jerusalem! What is it but a high, wide plane of thought—that "holy ground" upon which man must stand to meet his God, ere he can commune with eternal Good? That fair broad city set upon a hill! Surely the measure of it, is measureless Infinity: surely the fulness thereof, is the substance of Immortal Mind, while Love alone is King!

CHAPTER XVI

NEWNESS OF LIFE

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace,
Ring in the valiant man and free,
The eager heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

—*Tennyson.*

THREE weeks had passed since that morning upon which Lady Cecil Gwynne had found sudden relief from the pain which had haunted her life for so long. Three wonderful weeks! For during that short space of time she rose above the sickness which had seemed to her to be worse than death, and entered into the exultation of new-found health and strength.

To-day, she sat in the garden under the shade of a beautiful pergola, over which grew a luxuriant cover of creeping roses, now in full bloom. The Duchess of Westmoreland was beside her and spoke of many things which sounded strange indeed to her ear, but brought great peace to her heart.

"As you know," the Duchess said, "your brother was with us in London when Lady Margaret's letter, asking him to obtain Christian Science treatment for you, arrived. He told us that you had asked him to do so once before, but that his own prejudice against

it was very strong. He had heard that it was through the help of Christian Science that my husband's life was saved some years ago, but he had not believed it and had no idea that we had become workers in the Cause. After a long talk with my husband, however, he immediately put your case into the hands of a practitioner. We were of course able to direct him to the proper quarter in London, and we were not at all surprised when he received Lady Margaret's good news a few days later. I do not think, however, that he quite believed it until he actually saw you sitting out here upon our arrival."

Lady Cecil's face was very grave, but the hopeless look of sorrow was gone from her eyes, and the sickly hue of her skin was yielding to a warmer tint.

"It seems almost too wonderful," she said softly; then added firmly, "but I know that it is true."

"Yes, it is true;" her friend answered, "I am sure of that. My husband's life was, as I have told you, quickly saved by Christian Science, but the disease was not eliminated without a steady fight against the false beliefs which had caused it—a fight which has left us both higher than we ever hoped to stand, before we studied this most practical religion."

And so they talked, and the minutes sped on; and Cecil never wearied; but now listening, now questioning her friend, she drank in this glorious gospel of deliverance with its promise of redemption from sin, sickness and death.

Upon the terrace above Lady Margaret walked in quiet converse with the Duke. More calmly she listened, as he poured into her waiting ear the new-old story of faith passed into sight.

At last she paused and said in a voice held low by the greatness of the thought which ruled her;

"I thank you, Duke; I know that this of which you speak to me is indeed the Truth, and I thank you. You have given me back my dead, but, oh! transformed beyond my highest hopes of heaven. For how feeble was my youthful conception, or rather misconception, of the Truth! I see that I had to loose my hold of *that*, before I could search clearly for the Christ; and how glorious is the Christ which you now reveal to me! I have carefully studied the book you sent to us day and night. 'Science and Health'* is truly a 'Key to the Scriptures'! Now with Paul I can say, 'I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'"

"It is useful to note how constantly and how boldly Paul strikes the note of progress," the Duke answered. "It is the law which all must, sooner or later, obey; but it is strange how reluctant many are to obey it, dissatisfied though they are with life as they find it. Once again the healing Christ comes to his own, and once again his own receive him not; but it cannot long continue thus. Man is satiated with sin, sorrow, sickness and death, and the time approaches when the human mind will react—for what is it but a pendulum?—and demand a change. But the misery of mortal man has yet to reach its height and depth! Harmony here on earth, *here and now*, awaits those

* "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," by Mary Baker G. Eddy.

who, having ears, will hear—the harmony of a healthy mind *and* healthy body; the harmony of sin forgiven, *because* destroyed; the harmony of the one Mind and Man as the reflection of that one Mind. Paul's words are to-day being proved by thousands of happy people to be literally true; 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' And what are these words except an echo of those spoken of man 'in the beginning,' when God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'? In a measure—a measure which is in exact ratio to the individual understanding of omnipresent Good—man's spiritual reality is demonstrated daily in Christian Science."

"I understand," Lady Margaret replied thoughtfully. "In Christian Science you regard Man as the perfect work of a perfect God; you regard him as spiritual and unfallen; in fact, as the reflection of his Principle—God."

"Certainly," the Duke answered gravely; "for we worship a God of good and good alone; a God who thinks no evil and could never have created it, and we read, 'I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: . . . That which hath been is now.' If we believe the Bible at all, we must believe that all which God, Good, created *is* eternally good."

"It is a beautiful thought," his companion answered; and her face was full of joy as she turned and led the way to the pergola under which Lady Cecil still sat.

And as the days passed, Cecil Gwynne grew more

calm and strong until she appeared to her cousin to be not only her old self again, but better. She grew gradually more loving and more thoughtful for those around her than she had been even in the past. Soon they began to talk of returning to England, for Lord Brecon needed his sister's help in London, and it seemed wonderful to Lady Cecil to think that she could actually be of use in the world once more, instead of only a burden and constant care to those who loved her. Her cure was not yet complete, for she had lain too long imprisoned by pain, and had thus formed a regular habit of egotistical thought which did not immediately yield to the first call of Truth. But slowly and surely the renewal of the mind went on beneath the transforming touch of Love, and quite steadily the body responded to the awakening thought. Not in a moment, however, can the "old man" be cast off, and yet cast off it must be, ere the "new man" can be manifested. Gradually, for lack of that nourishment which the laws of invalidism supply to the "natural man," old things began to pass away, for the law of Good was at work making "all things new." Gradually, in the place of petulance patience reigned; and where excitement formerly held sway, the calm of God more often ruled her life. Thus, as the sere leaf falls off for lack of food, and the spring growth is manifested in all the joy of its new-born strength, there began for Cecil Gwynne the first real springtime of her life—a spring which shall, in the fulness of time, pass on into that eternal summer wherein the leaf shall never fade nor the tree be for one moment fruitless.

CHAPTER XVII

EBB AND FLOW

We are ne'er like angels till our passion dies.
—*Thomas Dekker.*

"And when," said Mr. Saul, "shall we be married?"

Lady Cecil Gwynne threw a warning glance around.

"There are," she said, "quite a hundred people in the room."

"I am aware of it," Robert Saul answered, rather grimly.

"See, Robert," Cecil spoke in a low voice, and quickly, "we will be married as soon as ever you wish it, after you have heard that which I have to tell you."

For an instant Mr. Saul's thought flashed uneasily back over the past year.

"What," he asked, "can you possibly have to tell me that could hinder our marriage?"

"Cecil!" Lady Margaret Courcy touched her cousin upon the arm, "Brecon is looking for you; I believe that people are thinking of saying 'Good-bye.'"

A look of relief lighted up Mr. Saul's face, as he saw guest after guest shake hands with their host and hostess.

"At last!" he said to Lady Margaret, "I shall be able to talk to her. I have come over four thousand

miles on purpose, you know;" and he smiled impatiently.

"I am very much afraid," Lady Margaret said gently, "that you will not be able to see my cousin alone to-night. There are rather exalted guests staying in the house, and she is really never free. You doubtless saw Lord Brecon's appointment in the papers. Just now, when London is full of the nation's guests, neither he nor Cecil have a moment to call their own."

"And when," Mr. Saul demanded, "does England empty of these foreigners?"

"Some time next week," Lady Margaret answered as she moved towards a departing friend.

Did Lady Margaret Courcy seriously suppose, Mr. Saul asked himself, that he would contemplate waiting a whole week for an hour's conversation with Cecil Gwynne?

His year of roving in Central Africa had cut him free, in thought at least, from the chains of conventional society, and he was for the moment inclined to dispute its claims.

Five minutes later he stood before Cecil. "I will call," he said distinctly, "at eleven o'clock to-morrow if that is not too early for you."

There was that in his manner which drew attention and brought a flush to Lady Cecil's cheek.

Instantly Lord Brecon broke the little silence. "Look in," he said, "at luncheon; we are more often at home then than at any other time."

Mr. Saul, sore and irritated at his own mistake, took a hasty farewell and left the house feeling both angry and hurt. Certainly, he decided, he would *not* make an item at luncheon in Grosvenor Square the next day.

He wished to see Lady Cecil alone, not again among a crowd—a number of strangers whose interests were matters of no moment to him. He had reached England only that afternoon, and, after a hurried dinner upon his arrival in London, had dressed and at once gone round to Grosvenor Square. With no anticipation of seeing Cecil, for the hour was late, he had still hoped to find the Earl in his library, and to have thus obtained some news of her—news for which he had hungered for a year. His surprise was great when he reached Lord Brecon's house to see lights streaming from every window. The sound of music proceeding from the drawing-room told him that a reception was being held. He had, however, heard of Lord Brecon's appointment at the Foreign Office and concluded that, in spite of his sister's ill-health, he was obliged to entertain. No doubt Miss Beresford or Lady Margaret Courcy had taken her place as hostess.

When he entered the ballroom a few minutes later and saw what appeared to him to be Cecil Gwynne waltzing to the soft strains of a string band, his astonishment stayed his foot upon the threshold and riveted his gaze upon her. That Cecil was somewhere upstairs, either in bed or, at best, upon her couch, he never doubted. In all his life, however, he had never seen two people so much alike as was the girl before him to the woman whom he loved. Like, and yet unlike! for looking more intently at her Robert told himself that the dancer was younger and more beautiful than Cecil. There was also something in this woman's face which he had never seen in the face of Cecil Gwynne. Just what this something was he could not define, but he was distinctly conscious of its presence.

His direct gaze drew Lady Cecil's attention, and immediately she crossed the room, and held out a welcoming hand.

"Then you got my letter," she said. "I was afraid that it might just miss you in Angola."

"Your letter?" Mr. Saul repeated stupidly; "I don't understand."

"Evidently you did not get it, and that is why you do not understand," Lady Cecil replied. "Never mind! you are in England again and——"

"It is not possible," Mr. Saul said, with slow utterance, "that you can be Cecil Gwynne!"

A bright smile lit up the girl's face. "Yes," she answered softly. "My letter would have explained the—the sudden resurrection which so astounds you, but evidently you missed it."

"I missed several of my letters while travelling inland: the postal arrangements are most uncertain, and of course I did not expect to hear from you," Mr. Saul answered.

But he hardly knew what he said; he was only conscious of Cecil's presence by his side.

"Robert," Cecil spoke gently, "we must have a quiet talk as soon as possible. I will come to you the moment that I can get free."

An hour later she had joined him, but only for five minutes; and now, as he walked homeward, Mr. Saul was swayed by strong emotion, and his feelings were so mixed that he found it difficult to review the last few hours calmly.

At one moment his heart glowed with the thought that Cecil was well again; the next, his jealous nature ruled him, and he declared that she no longer loved

him, for surely she could have made an opportunity, had she really desired one, for a quiet conversation with him. Through all his perturbed thought there ran an irritating consciousness of something of which he was fully sensible, though he could not understand it—an indefinable change in Cecil, to which he could give no name.

He went straight to his room and wrote a long letter to her. He would not read it over, for he was not sure that he should send it if he did. He was perfectly aware that it was an unreasonable letter. He was, absurdly enough, angry with himself for writing it and yet obstinately determined to send it. Because he was suffering, he acted unfairly both towards himself and Cecil Gwynne. He was too clear-headed not to know that he was so acting, but, for the moment, he allowed himself, strong man though he was, to be controlled by wayward impulse. That the letter expressed a passionate exacting frame of mind, he did not fully realise and would by no means have admitted, even to himself. After posting it, however, he wished that he could recall every word that it contained. Indeed, never before had he spent such a *mauvais quart d'heure* as that which he endured while awaiting Lady Cecil's reply the next morning. Would she answer at all, or if she did, would her answer be such as he could bear to receive from her? He spent an aimless morning walking through the Park and Kensington Gardens, and twice he turned his steps towards Grosvenor Square, but decided that it would be both unadvisable and useless to precipitate matters in any way. The truth was, he suddenly realised that he never had had complete control over

himself in the matter of his love for Lady Cecil Gwynne, and he dared not risk an interview until he felt that he could hold himself completely in hand.

It was one o'clock as he reached his hotel, and he knew that an answer to his letter, if despatched by return, should be awaiting him. But it was not until he found that there were no letters at all for him that he understood how much he had counted upon Cecil's immediate reply. At luncheon an old acquaintance hailed him, and moved his seat in order that they might be at the same table. Mr. Saul wished that he had ordered a meal in a private room, for he felt in no mood for casual conversation. He answered his friend's good-natured enquiries about his year in Central Africa so lamely that the Rev. Arthur Northcut not unnaturally summarised the situation, when speaking to a mutual acquaintance, by the terse remark, "The wretched climate has ruined him; he has lost all his vigour."

By seven o'clock Mr. Saul could wait no longer; he would surely find Cecil at home just before the dinner hour. He must know whether she still cared for him or not. The possibility that her renewed strength might have brought with it some change in her love, weighed upon his mind, though he swore to himself that such a thing could not be. He had been so faithful to her during her dark hours, and she had, he knew, so noble a nature that it was not possible that she should esteem his devotion lightly, now that the sun once more shone. His love had been to her an unfailing ray of light through her long night of pain and weakness, and certainly could not be forgotten now.

"Her ladyship has just driven out," the footman said in answer to his enquiry.

"When is she expected to return?" he asked, with that outward calm which never failed him in the presence of his inferiors.

"I will enquire, sir;" the man answered, and a second servant came forward. "Her ladyship," he said, "has ordered the carriage to be at Marlborough House at half-past ten."

Sick at heart, Mr. Saul turned away. "Surely," he muttered bitterly, "*surely* she could have found time, however exacting her social engagements may be, to write me one line!"

He walked slowly back to his hotel, but his revulsion of feeling was so great, his disappointment at missing Lady Cecil so keen, that, though he found himself glancing towards the office as he passed through the hall, he would not ask if any letters had arrived for him during his absence. A third disappointment was more than he felt prepared to meet. He felt quite worn out as he mounted the stairs on the way to his bedroom, and wearily concluded that the last attack of malaria which had caught him just as he left Angola must have weakened him more than he thought.

"A letter for you, sir!"

Mr. Saul turned abruptly and took the note which the office boy, who had quietly followed him up the stairs, held out to him.

"Thanks."

The bedroom door was shut and locked hastily. This Robert Saul gave himself time to do, before he tore open the seal. He looked at the first line, then,

with hands which trembled in spite of the strong will which would have had them still, he rapidly turned the letter about and raced his eye to the bottom of the last page.

"Thank God!" he muttered brokenly. "How could I doubt her! I never will again. Nothing, not even a thought, shall ever come between us again." Then, still a little shaken by the emotion which ruled him so completely, he read the letter through. It was very short, but showed no sign of haste, and the writing was bolder and firmer than any he had ever seen by Cecil's hand since the early days of their engagement.

"I simply have not one hour," she wrote, "to call my own, until next week; but on Tuesday our guests start for the Continent and I shall be free. Come at eleven o'clock, but of course I shall keep the whole day for you."

He was a little disappointed to realise that it was a letter such as might have been read by anyone, but no! the signature told him many things of which Cecil would never have spoken to another, for she signed herself, "Lovingly your love—The little Lady Cecil." Immediately he was back in the early days of their courtship—days when it had been new to him to walk beside her slender form, and during which he had once told her that "the little Lady Cecil was altogether too young and too small to have such a strong will of her own."

Robert was ashamed now to remember the miserable jealousy and self-inflicted torture which he had endured for so many hours. His imaginary fears and doubts did neither Cecil nor himself any justice, as

he realised fully enough now that he reviewed the matter calmly. Well, it was over: and he put the little note in his pocket-book and said that he would wait as Jacob waited for Rachel if need be, but never again would he allow a cloud to come between him and Cecil Gwynne. Nevertheless, he hoped that the next week would find their wedding day winging its way towards them, and he determined to leave no stone unturned to bring about their speedy marriage.

The week of waiting passed quickly in spite of some rebellious moments, during which Mr. Saul looked askance at the festivities which kept him from Lady Cecil's side. They met, of course, but only in the presence of others, and upon the whole Robert preferred his solitary rambles in the Parks, illumined as his thought was with bright hopes for the future. For was not Cecil stronger and better in health? *Yes*, and sweeter and gentler in manner than ever he had known her. Thus his mental horizon was cloudless and lighted with the anticipation of a greater joy than he had dreamed life could ever hold for him again.

CHAPTER XVIII

HUMAN LIMITATIONS

Remember, when the judgment's weak, the prejudice is strong.
—*O'Hara.*

Mr. Saul ran lightly down the steps of a certain well-known house in Arlington Street. His interview with one of His Majesty's Ministers had been very pleasing, for he had that morning been told that his name was mentioned for preferment in the Church. That he owed this, in a great measure, to the fact that a warm friendship had existed for half a lifetime between his own father and the Minister in question he was perfectly aware, but he did both this distinguished member of the Cabinet and himself the justice to believe that this fact alone would not have had the necessary weight, had it not been linked to the high reputation which he himself undoubtedly bore. He could not be unaware of his remarkable popularity as a preacher, and he knew also that he was considered one of the most beautiful readers in the English Church. Crowded congregations every Sunday and laudatory articles in the papers had, before he left England for Central Africa, pointed to the probability of his rapid advancement. He had not expected, however, to be offered a bishopric so soon, and it was particularly pleasing to him that he

should receive the intimation of this honour upon the day of his first real talk with Cecil Gwynne. He quite intended before the day was much older finally to decide upon the date of their marriage; and he further intended, unless Cecil had some very good reason to the contrary (and he did not for a moment suppose that such could be the case), that their marriage should take place almost immediately.

He was a little surprised to hear, when he reached Grosvenor Square, that her ladyship had not returned from Victoria Station, where she had driven in attendance upon the Princess.

"I will wait," he told the servant, and the man immediately turned and led the way upstairs.

Left alone, Mr. Saul glanced appreciatively round the beautiful drawing-room. The conservatory at the further end was filled with a mass of bright flowers; then turning, the eye was refreshed by the cool green of the carpet, and the delicate white and gold of the panelled walls. Groups of Cecil's favourite maidenhair ferns filled the deep concavity between the white pillars which supported the high mantelpiece, and in their midst a tiny fountain played. With a sigh of content Mr. Saul lifted one of the silk window curtains aside and stepped out upon the balcony. What a contrast to the cool and quiet of the room within! A London balcony upon a hot June morning, and the noise of a pleasure-seeking world all around! Very soon he retraced his steps, for he had seen Lady Cecil's motor turning the corner of the street. She had kept him waiting a whole week for this interview! She should not find him too complete a suppliant, watching as a little child watches for the mother whose coming

is delayed. He would stand here by the further door, and she should come that short distance across the room to meet him! For had she not kept him waiting even to-day?

Presently the door opened, and Cecil was before him. Robert drew in his breath sharply, as the girl stood there quite still. Dainty and beautiful, gowned in cloth of palest lilac, which swept its way in clinging folds about her form as though it loved to touch her, she seemed a perfect part of a perfect whole, in absolute harmony with her surroundings, which immediately assumed their proper value, as does the background of a picture truly painted.

"Look," she said, and she held up a great bunch of white lilac. "See how fresh and cool the petals are, even though the day is hot."

She lifted the flowers high and smiled with eyes and lips as she leant a little forward.

But she did not come one step towards him.

And he would not move.

"She shall come the length of the room to meet me," he whispered; while the laughter shone in his eyes, and his lips pressed tightly the one upon the other; "she shall come the whole length of the room," he breathed, "even if I must wait a little longer."

But he had much ado to stay his stride, for he hungered to imprison the brightness and the joy before him within a strong embrace.

His hand shot out and held the door behind him; but he did not move.

"Smell them," she said, "they are sweet and delicious, though they have travelled from the North," and she held her flowers higher.

"Sweet and delicious." The words possessed him and . . .

"Cecil!" he cried, and his voice shook upon the word, "Cecil, I believe I have waited all my life for this!"

He did not mean to be rough—he had never in his life been anything but gentle with a woman—nor was he now, yet the girl trembled in his arms and turned white beneath his lips; "Robert!" she cried, "wait, oh, wait! I have so much to tell you!"

"So much! beloved, so much!" he answered, "for it is a year and a week since we have spoken together!" And now he knelt and placed his arms about her.

"Little Lady Cecil," he said in a voice that was of itself a caress, "tell me that you love me."

"Robert, you *know*."

"Dear heart," he answered gently. "I *know*, yet tell me."

Then, as she did not answer, he gravely took her face between his hands and asked upon what day she would become his wife. And still she did not answer, though he lifted his head and silently asked a herald of that day. But she did not give it; and Robert, chilled, rose and asked her rather formally, where she would be seated.

Then at last she answered him, but slowly, as though it was not easy.

"We will be married at once, if you still wish it—*after* we have talked together."

"If I still wish it, Cecil? For years I have wished it! Do you dream, silly little one, that there is *anything* which you could tell me, that could possibly alter a wish that has grown with my mental growth,

until it is part of my inner self?" He spoke passionately again, and stood eagerly by her side, impatient for his answer.

But Cecil Gwynne did not immediately reply. Instead, she walked slowly into the conservatory and stood there for so long a time and so still, handling with an evidently unconscious touch a spray of stephanotis, that Robert Saul followed her at last and passed her by; then turning, he stood face to face with her.

"There is something that I do not understand, which has come between you and me," he said.

He spoke quietly; but he was aware that to stay the tremble of his hand, he needed to grasp the lapel of his coat, and his musical voice broke harshly upon the last word as it left his lips.

Still Cecil did not answer; and then it was that Robert realised that the demon jealousy, which he had thought was slain, was lying only dormant in his heart; for now it rose up and possessed him; nor would it be controlled.

What he said he did not afterwards remember, but suddenly Cecil spoke for the first time since he had given his passion rein.

"Robert," she said sternly, "be silent, and remember that to-day I have allowed you to put your lips upon my own. *That* is the only answer you can need to your wild question, Do I love you?"

Ashamed, he held his peace and was suddenly calm, for he knew that, whatever had come between him and Cecil Gwynne, it could not be the love of any other man.

"It is *because* I love you," Cecil continued, "that

I find it so difficult to speak about the great change that has come into my life of late."

"You mean, little one," and now Robert spoke softly again, and very kindly, "your wonderful restoration to health. But why should it be difficult to speak of that to me, my best beloved? You surely know that, in all the world, no one can rejoice as I rejoice to see you well again."

"That is what Brecon said at first," Cecil answered sadly, "now, he sometimes speaks as though he would willingly have me back in all that awful pain."

Robert's face wore a look of absolute horror.

"Cecil," he exclaimed, "what can you mean? He must be mad! But of course you are under some misapprehension—your suffering was terrible to Brecon."

"I know," she answered sadly, "but—well, no doubt he will explain his views to you himself; I will not speak of them; for I cannot understand the line he takes."

Robert Saul took her hand and held it gently.

"Little one," he said, and he drew her towards a chair, though he himself remained standing, "I am puzzled, but I am sure that I can help you."

"You can help me more than anyone in all the world," she answered eagerly, "if you will."

"If I will?" he looked astonished. "Why, sweetheart, what is there that I will not do for you?"

Then she told him. Told him that she was being lifted from the darkness of pain and sickness into the marvellous light of health and peace; that she was already able to help others whom she found, as she herself had been found, hopeless and in deepest misery.

Told him also that she was learning to love a God at hand, who was not a God of good *and* evil, but a God of good and good alone. She told him of the Christ, who was now becoming to her an actual reality; and she spoke to him of the vital Christianity which had become the motive of her life.

All this she told him, and much more; and when she ceased to speak, when she had said all that she then deemed it wise to say, when she had spoken as much as she thought she might upon the subject which now ruled her life, she raised her eyes and saw before her a face of stone! And she read the future stretched before them in one glance.

"You will of course give up this fad when you marry me," Mr. Saul's tone was both cold and final.

"You do not understand," she answered brokenly; "you do not know what you are asking."

Robert Saul smiled contemptuously. "My dear child, it is you who do not understand. I know all about Christian Science. It is merely one more of the many sects which have sprung up of late years, only it is more pretentious than any other, and, in short—a blasphemous creed. Promise me," he added hastily, "that you will give it up."

"I cannot," she said, but her face was troubled. Robert did not notice this, however, as he poured out upon her a flood of passionate protest. She had wrecked his life, he told her, and he would far rather have seen her dead than a blasphemer. *Now* they must part, for he would not see her again, until she wrote and told him that she was prepared to take her proper place as a Bishop's wife.

"A Bishop?" Lady Cecil asked.

"Yes," Mr. Saul laughed shortly; "I have been mentioned for a bishopric. I had meant to tell you, but now—it does not matter," and he turned as though to leave her.

"Robert," she pleaded. "Oh, wait; surely there must be some way out of this! Help me to find it."

"Of course there is a way; it only remains for you to take it," he answered roughly.

"I cannot give up my religion," she replied gently, "but, Robert, . . . help me to think. Dear, I love you; help me to think!"

"Your love appears to be of a whimsical kind," he answered bitterly. "I will not compete with a hysterical fad: when it has worn itself out, why—I shall be waiting."

And he bowed formally and closed the door behind him—too angry to realise altogether what he did.

When half-way down the stairs he stopped suddenly. The struggle with wounded pride lasted a full minute; then he turned, and retracing his steps he re-entered the drawing-room. Cecil was sitting quietly, as he had left her. The calmness of her attitude and the reliant look upon her face somehow angered him anew.

"Cecil," he asked harshly, "if I have seemed rough, forgive me. I love you. Once more I ask, will you give up this thing?"

She rose and stood before him. Almost she smiled; the thing he asked of her was so impossible. For an interval of time which seemed to Robert a long one, they faced one another in silence. Then Cecil Gwynne gave her answer in a manner which, though it left no doubt of its finality, would have convinced

Robert, had he been calm enough to judge her fairly, that it was not given easily.

"Robert," she said evenly, "ask rather, can I give up Christian Science? And I *must* answer, no; I neither can, nor should I dare, to turn back now that Truth has called me and bids me follow wherever it may lead."

"Truth, child!"

And Robert mocked her in his bitter rage, as turning, he left the room without another word.

Could she have seen the agony in his face as he drove home, Cecil would have understood that the man's sense of duty was costing him dear. One week! and he might have held her in his arms, his wedded wife! Now—Robert shivered from head to foot. He had called this thing "a fad." He had essayed to treat it as a girl's weak whim, but the horrible truth was patent to him—Cecil intended to adhere to Christian Science. She had only said a few words in answer to his violent protest, but those few words, he now knew, she meant to be final. He felt her self-possession as a rebuke, and realised that it was he who had spoken angrily; it was he who had occupied a position of doubtful dignity: and this made him the more bitter. Deeply despondent, he entered his hotel and went straight to his own room, remaining there for hours.

CHAPTER XIX

SELF-DECEPTION

'Tis pride, rank pride, and haughtiness of soul;
I think the Romans call it stoicism.

—*Addison.*

During the weeks that immediately followed his rupture with Lady Cecil Gwynne, Mr. Saul said to himself every day that she would surely write to him, for he argued hopefully, that he only needed to give her time in order that she might realise that his love was more necessary to her than this new interest. He deliberately designated her embrace of Christian Science as a mere phase, which must pass the more rapidly now that she was faced with so momentous a choice. Not once did it occur to him that *he* should alter his views. It was unnatural to him to give way, and it had become a habit with him to expect others to do so instead should an *impasse* arise. He had always regarded women as the weaker sex, mentally as well as physically, and it was inconceivable to him that any woman should pit herself against him in a matter of this sort. Not that Cecil Gwynne was doing anything of the kind, for though the personal element in the affair necessarily presented itself to her, the matter was in her eyes far above the mere measuring of swords with Robert Saul. But of this *he* knew nothing, and it was therefore not unnatural that, as the weeks passed

and brought no communication from Cecil, he should conclude that she had ceased to care for him.

Over and over again Robert reviewed their interview. That hour had been fraught with intense pain for him. How came it that Cecil had been so calm? Did she not feel, even then, the severing of the tie which bound them? It seemed that she must have support, of which he did not know; or, was it simply that she never had loved him as he counted the love of man and woman? Fiercely jealous of that which he could not understand, perplexed by the intangibility of that which had defeated him—and which he dimly felt to be his master, though he could find no name for it,—he resented Cecil's calmness and construed it as a sign of indifference. Formerly he had read her like a book, but, since his return from Central Africa, he was distinctly aware that she had acquired an inward serenity which puzzled him, for it evaded his attempt at mental dissection. With the injustice of a hasty nature he now condemned, as heartless, conduct to which he could not find the key. He rushed himself into a condition of mind unworthy of his clearer judgment, deciding that Cecil was neither less nor more than a coquette—unworthy of the love which he had so generously lavished upon her. With an obstinate desperation, born of the bitter pain and deep humiliation which governed him in this matter, he set himself deliberately to work to separate his thought from her, and endeavoured to keep steadily before him the probability that their future lives would be lived apart. He realised that they would inevitably meet occasionally in the house of some one or other of their mutual acquaintances, but obviously such chance meetings would be

meaningless to them both. That Lady Cecil Gwynne's self-control could be trusted to sustain her safely in any such chance meeting he knew. She would talk to him at dinner or receive her tea from his hand, should the occasion arise, without betraying to a watching world, tiptoeing in its curiosity, one single heart-beat. And so he sought to resign himself to a future from which all the light had fled, and which seemed to hold within its years no hint of joy for him; a future so bereft of all that made life, in his eyes, seem worth the having, that it was strange that he should not have unbent somewhat and gone out a little way towards the achievement of a mutual understanding.

But any such course would have been quite foreign to his nature, and also, he thought himself to be stronger than he really was, and supposed himself to be as capable of living without love as were others whom he knew. And, all the time, the man's great necessity was to love and to be beloved. Thus a perpetual tempest raged within him, and he made very little effort to still it but allowed it to drive him whither it would. Once, for a pregnant moment, he anchored his thought to the year that he had spent in peaceful seclusion at St. Anselm and asked himself, should he return and take the final vows by which he might still govern his life? But he became aware that he now quite consciously rebelled against a rule so circumscribed; and it was then that there formed in his mind the determination to spend his life among the stress and strain of a needy world. To this determination he looked back with gratitude in after years—years which saw in Robert Saul the ripening of a more stalwart manhood than ever would have been his, had he

returned to St. Anselm's and allowed himself to become the tool of the human will and the obedient servant of a dogma narrowed by rule and formula.

But as the days passed into weeks, and still he heard nothing from Cecil Gwynne, pride so possessed him that he deliberately essayed to efface her altogether from his mind, and threw himself energetically into the maturing of new plans from which she was necessarily excluded.

As the weeks passed on to months the world grew weary of asking the question to which his stern face made no reply, and was forced to content itself with twenty versions of his story—all incorrect.

CHAPTER XX

MENTAL FERMENTATION

Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
  Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
  Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet! I do not ask to see—
  The distant scene—one step enough for me.
—John Henry Newman.

And what of Cecil Gwynne?

After Robert Saul left her, she stood for a moment in the middle of the room; then turning she left it and hastily entered her boudoir.

For hours she remained there seeking peace. Surely, she cried in her heart, God would never ask of her so great a sacrifice as this? Surely, surely, He had not granted her the magnificent joy of renewed health, only now to dash the cup of gladness from her lips, refusing her the one thing needful to the completion of her happiness. "I cannot bear it, I cannot bear it," she cried aloud. "I cannot give him up. Ask any other thing of me! Ask all my wealth! all that men deem most desirable, but leave me this!"

Passionately she prayed, pouring out the sorrow which possessed her. Still no comfort came; still the way was altogether dark.

Twice her maid ventured to knock, and twice was

sent away. Twilight passed, and the night was there, and still she wept and prayed. Tempest-tossed, now driven here, now there! now well-nigh lost beneath the surging seas of sense; now terror-struck at the darkness of the clouds, which hung so low around her head and curtained all her vision with a veil of night; worn out at last, she slept.

Waking an hour later she heard her maid's voice at the door.

"My lady," the woman called: "it is ten o'clock, and you have had no dinner."

"I am going," she replied, "to see Lady Margaret Courcy. Get ready to come with me."

Who had said the words? Had she? and whence came the thought which prompted them? As a flash of light amid the darkness of her pain, the remembrance of Margaret Courcy had come to Cecil Gwynne. She would go instantly and put it all before her cousin. Margaret was so sure of this new road, she seemed to walk it with unfaltering tread, where she herself could only follow with a doubting heart; she would go to her and ask her to fetch Robert to her side again. She would ask Margaret to make the whole thing clear to him. He would understand it all so well, if Margaret spoke to him and told him that it was the "Truth." He admired Margaret Courcy's high intellectual attainments, and knew moreover that she was always calm—a woman whose judgment would not easily be found at fault. Yes, Margaret would make the whole thing clear to him, and then . . . and then, . . . this awful nightmare would surely pass away, and all the road be clear and smooth once more.

But during the short walk to her cousin's house, the girl's heart fell again, and it was with trembling lips and a breaking voice that she told Margaret Courcy of her need. Lady Margaret listened but said no word in comment, for she had known that it would be thus; she had read Mr. Saul's complex nature better than could Cecil, with her more biassed judgment; and she knew that the time was now at hand when his love for his cousin would be submitted to the severest possible test. Sincerely religious, he was unconsciously swayed by pride of priestcraft and of learning. Before he would stop so much as to enquire into the rights and wrongs of any ethical question, it must, she felt sure, be presented to him fully armed with the credentials of scholarly authorship and supported by the might of orthodoxy.

"Speak to me, Margaret, for pity's sake! Tell me that he did not mean it;" and Cecil sank her head upon her cousin's lap, and sobbed aloud.

For all answer, Margaret Courcy bent and kissed the girl's forehead gently; then she lifted her quietly to her feet and put into her hand a little book.

"Rest here," she said, "and read; I will go to my room and help you."

"Oh, Margaret," the girl pleaded, "stay with me! I cannot read;" and she closed the book impatiently and put it down. "I believe," and Cecil faltered as she spoke, "I believe that if it really comes to choosing between Science and Robert, that I shall choose him!" She spoke the last few words defiantly, as though fighting some thought within her heart.

Margaret Courcy did not answer, but kissed her cousin again and left the room, gently closing the

door behind her. Alone, Cecil threw herself upon the sofa.

"Let there be light," she sobbed, "let there be light! I cannot see my way!"

Presently she grew calmer and lay quietly resting among the soft cushions; and when Lady Margaret entered the room an hour later, Cecil smiled as she rose from the sofa and said, "Read to me, Margaret, will you? Here is 'Science and Health.' It is still quite dark; I do not yet see the way out of this tangle, but I am not afraid any more, for I know now that a way will surely open."

Lady Margaret took the book and read aloud for a short time, making no comment, though occasionally she paused and silently dwelt upon some passage for a moment. When she ceased reading, Cecil Gwynne rose and bade her a calm good-night.

"Thank you," she said, "that is a beautiful chapter which you have just read. I shall dwell upon that great thought and keep it with me to-night, I still do not know which way to turn, but to-morrow——"

"To-morrow," Lady Margaret gently interrupted, "you will know exactly which way to turn. At present, all that you have to do is to leave to-morrow with God, remembering that 'infinite Wisdom is infinite Direction, and that infinite Love is infinite Protection.'"

CHAPTER XXI

A BARQUE—WITH WHITE SAILS UNFURLED

> God's plans, like lilies pure and white unfold,
> We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart—
> Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.
>
> —*Anon.*

It was early spring and many months had passed since the day upon which Mr. Saul and Lady Cecil Gwynne had parted. Strange to say not once since then had they chanced to encounter one another. At first Mr. Saul felt sure that they would often meet, and had rather armed himself against the attraction of Lady Cecil's presence. As time wore on, however, he believed that his life would be livable without her by his side, for other interests gradually crept into his thoughts and occupied his time. Foremost among these was his sister, Winnie Stuart, and her only child, Malcolm. Robert Saul had settled himself in his London house soon after his return from Africa, but finding the empty rooms unbearably lonely, he had welcomed, with an eagerness which surprised himself, a cable from his sister saying that she was about to leave India in order to see something of her only child. Obviously the most suitable arrangement was for brother and sister to live together. Malcolm of course spent his holidays with them and gradually found his way into his uncle's heart, bringing comfort to the lonely man.

Winnie Stuart had scarcely been home a month, when she was shocked into a serious illness by the sudden announcement of her husband's death. She was informed by the military authorities that he had been killed at polo the day before his intended embarkation for England; and after this her health, always delicate, seemed to fail hopelessly. Sometimes Robert Saul asked himself despairingly, why those most dear to him must suffer as they did, while he stood helplessly by. All that money could do he did, but the doctors only shook their heads and talked of "time." These sudden shocks, they told him, often resulted in severe nervous prostration, and he must wait for the bright summer days and then get Mrs. Stuart into the country as soon as possible. Gradually he found himself assuming the position of nurse once more, and very tenderly he waited upon his fragile sister. Her gentle nature seemed to touch him, where a more robust temperament would perhaps have irritated his own highly strung disposition.

In one way Winnie suited him exactly as a companion, she was a beautiful listener and the most patient creature on earth. She was always content to write at his dictation, no matter how long it might take, for she delighted at all times to do his bidding. One of those people born to obey the stronger will about them, Mrs. Stuart never once attempted to use her own judgment. It was ever so much easier to let her brother decide every question that might arise, and then simply to do as he told her. Thus it came about that Robert began to find a sort of satisfaction in her sweet obedience and unquestioning adoration. For it was nothing less. She always had thought her

only brother the most wonderful of men, and now that he was certain of a bishopric in the near future, why, she thought the Church fortunate to count him among its servants. But to Mr. Saul had come a bitter disappointment. The bishopric for which he had been mentioned was given to another. Privately it was explained to him that influence had been used in a certain quarter, the net result being that a very average man now held an exceptionally high appointment in the Church. But Robert Saul was assured that the very next See that fell vacant was bespoken for him, and for some days now Winnie Stuart had been watching the bulletins which daily announced the failing health of the Bishop of Yeovil. She wished the old man no ill—she was of too gentle and sweet a disposition to wish ill to anyone—but she felt quite sure that he had held the bishopric too long, and that Robert would manage the diocese much better; better indeed than anyone else possibly could! Thus she was both astonished and disappointed when the old Bishop's death was quickly followed by the announcement of a new creation, and once more Robert was not the chosen man.

Mr. Saul was himself grievously disappointed, for he had felt quite sure of the appointment, though he was much too reticent and proud to dilate upon his hopes, even to his sister.

He was now carrying on the duties which he had so ably performed previous to his departure for Africa, and he remembered with pleasure the keen appreciation which his congregation had evinced, as soon as it was understood that he intended to resume the position which he had formerly held among them. It was

known that "the Vicar" always preached every Sunday morning and there was no other church in London so crowded by noon as his, and no other preacher in England who could so move his listeners. This pleased Mr. Saul. He was a man who loved to rule; a man to whom power was the bread of life. He could scarcely remember the time when he had not been king of his own society, and as a very young man he had revelled in the knowledge that he controlled those around him by the might of his superior intellect and forceful character. To those who knew him merely as one of the most highly-educated men in England and a very conspicuous Churchman, it would have been a surprise could they have seen him contentedly spending his few spare moments beside the sofa of his invalid sister. But there was a side to Mr. Saul's character quite hidden from the world and altogether unsuspected even by those who knew him best. The fact was that within Robert Saul there lay a great capacity for love, and he was possessed by a strong desire to be loved.

It would not occur to such a man to seek another wife after his experience with Lady Cecil Gwynne. He had given her the best that he could ever give to any woman in that way, and though he believed himself to be resigned to circumstances, he did not for a moment contemplate the possibility that he might, even in the distant future, wish to marry any other woman. He never had cared for anyone as he still cared for Cecil Gwynne; and now that he could not marry her, he settled down in a groove which he supposed would lead on, by a natural sequence of events, to a self-contained old bachelorhood.

But in reality he was far from content with his fate; far from satisfied with that which life gave him. Also, side by side with his discontent, there lived a bitter resentment against the cause, or what *he* considered to be the cause, of his incomplete and colourless existence. For his life *was* colourless, in spite of the fact that he was one of the busiest men in London, and, in a certain circle, the most sought after. But nothing interested him as it would have done could Cecil have been there to enter into it all with him; and she might have been there had it not been for this horrible "fad" (for he still persisted in calling it a "fad") that had separated them. It enraged him that a miserable question of this sort should have wrecked his life, and bereft him of the intellectual companionship to which he had looked forward, anticipating that, as the years should pass, he would be able to train and shape her thought to his heart's content.

Now he was entirely dependent upon Winnie, and it would not have occurred to him to discuss his work or studies with her. The very idea was absurd! She was not exactly stupid, but she had never read anything deeper than a novel since she went to her first ball, and besides, you cannot discuss any matter with a person who invariably agrees with you and who never by any chance initiates a remark. Thus it was that the reserve which was natural to the man, grew apace, and his heart became totally encrusted with a coldness and egotism that estranged him from many who sincerely admired his unusual gifts, and who paid a just tribute of praise to the unremitting toil of his life. He was known to be forming a habit of much self-abnegation—never sparing himself should a call for

help come from his poorest parishioner; spending hours by the bedside of those who sometimes scarcely thanked him for the efforts which he made to cheer them through a troubled time. He was known moreover to be a man of high ideals, who never flinched in the effort to live up to the lofty standard of purity and high morality which he thus upheld by deed as well as by his vigorous protests against sin, delivered Sunday after Sunday from his pulpit.

Mr. Saul had taken Mrs. Stuart and Malcolm—who was just home for the summer holidays—into the country and had himself returned to London for his Sunday duties. On Monday he was to join them for a well-earned rest. He was looking forward to the next few weeks, and meant to forget, if he could, the very existence of the crowded city in which his busy life was spent, and lose himself, if only for a short spell, in a world of scientific research. As he left his dinner table upon this Saturday night he asked if a parcel of books had arrived for him and was glad to receive an answer in the affirmative. For the next few weeks he would do nothing but take long walks across the wortleberry- and heather-clad hills, or sit out on the moor feasting upon the contents of that parcel.

The evening was very hot, and Robert Saul was tempted to wish he had told a curate to represent him at the concert to which he was now going; but it was held in aid of a deserving charity, in the inception and growth of which he and Cecil Gwynne had both taken a sustained interest, so the fancy had been strong upon him to go in person. He was a little late, but was too well known to be allowed to suffer in conse-

quence of that, and a seat had been reserved for him in the middle of one of the front rows. There were programmes of course, and he quickly ran his eye through one but immediately put it down with a distinct realisation of his disappointment. But he instantly forced his thought into another channel and refused to allow, even to himself, that he had expected to see one name in particular among the performers.

As the evening wore on he became a little bored and decided that it was a mistake for amateurs to perform in public in London, where their audience must inevitably be a critical one. The first part of the concert was over, and he fell to thinking about that parcel of new books and the quiet weeks before him, when, suddenly, he was roused from the state of apathy into which he had fallen into one of intense interest.

A gentleman had come upon the stage and announced that, owing to circumstances over which she had no control, Miss Greenway was unable to be present, and that Lady Cecil Gwynne had most kindly consented to sing in her place.

And now Cecil Gwynne was singing, and instantly Robert Saul knew that he had returned from Somersetshire, not to preach upon the morrow, but to hear Cecil sing to-night. Instantly he became aware that he had hoped for this and had come to the concert impelled by the wish to see her.

Why he had not consciously formulated, or followed up this motive, he did not now stop to consider. Cecil was there before him, and he knew that he had been hungering for the sight of her all the past year. He feasted his eyes upon her face and form and never moved them except once, and then he kept them closed,

because he dared not let the sudden moisture which rose within them be seen of men. Cecil's voice always had moved him deeply, but he had never heard her sing like this before! never realised the full beauty of her voice, nor enjoyed her cultivated rendering of any song, as he did to-night. He sat perfectly still and wished that the world were empty of all save Cecil and himself.

He did not lift his eyes until her song was ended and she left the stage. The rest of the programme became intolerable to him. To move was impossible, but it was only by a strong effort of will that he remained quietly seated after the concert was over, until some ladies upon either side of him rose from their seats and thus permitted him to go in search of Lady Cecil Gwynne.

He was determined to see her; quite determined to speak to her before she left the concert hall that night. His chagrin was therefore great when, after an exhaustive search among the crowd, he found that she had left the building the instant her song was over.

But he had seen her, had listened to her voice; and every nerve had vibrated as she sang. For hours that night he lay awake and asked himself how he could ever have supposed that it was possible for him to give her up, how he could ever have contemplated an existence entirely separated from hers.

From that night his thought was concentrated upon one single purpose—to win Cecil Gwynne for his wife. How it was to be done he did not stop to consider. Not for a moment, even now, did he propose to abate one jot or one tittle of his creed. Not for an instant did he propose to depart from the position which he

had taken up. It was Cecil who somehow must be made to give in: Cecil who must change her ridiculous views and, as he crisply put it to himself, come to her senses. Sometimes hope ran high as he looked back at the enterprises which, by sheer force of will, and the exercise of a certain quality which his contemporaries called grasp, he had carried triumphantly through, and he felt assured of success. At other times, he asked himself what was the meaning of that indefinable quality in Cecil which had struck him for the first time a year ago?

It had again impressed him forcibly upon the night of the concert, for he had then watched her face steadily during the first few moments of her song, and had seen in it something to which he could not put a name. Whatever it was, it baffled him and sometimes made him doubtful of success. Vaguely, he felt left behind and impatiently asked himself, how was he ever to come in touch with her again? Dimly, he realised that there was now a distance between them which had not before existed; but this only made him the more determined to bridge the chasm over and subject her will to his, in order that their lives might flow onward side by side—her will subservient to his own; her every thought wedded to his thought. And all the time he called it—love!

CHAPTER XXII

CALLED

Gird thy heavenly armour on,
Wear it ever night and day;
Ambushed lies the evil one—
Watch and pray.

—*C. Elliot.*
From "Geistliche Lieder."

It was autumn now, and many of the West End houses were full again. But day after day passed, and Mr. Saul neither heard nor saw anything of Lady Cecil Gwynne. He had written to her that August night, directly after his return from the concert, a brief note, for he knew himself to be deeply stirred, and there ran through his nature a certain contradiction—a curious vein of caution which sometimes made him stand *en garde* when he would have served his purpose better by stepping boldly out. This part of his nature was, however, unknown to Cecil Gwynne, who would have described him as the most impulsive man of her acquaintance; his note, therefore, appeared to her to be both cold and unrelenting in its tone. Her answer was equally brief and merely stated that she regretted her inability to receive him in Grosvenor Square as she was shortly leaving town until the autumn.

From that time until this Robert had counted the days until the fashionable world might be expected

to be "at home" once more, and for some weeks now he had been hoping to encounter Lady Cecil Gwynne casually. This, however, did not happen, and it did not occur to him that possibly Lady Cecil was careful to avoid those functions at which he would almost surely be present. Too proud to write to her again, he yet so longed to see her that he did not now attempt to disguise from himself his real motive, when he entered into social engagements which his many duties made it difficult for him to keep. Still he always kept them, and more than once he arrived at a musical reception only to find that Lord Brecon and his sister had just left.

Meanwhile, he was feeling happier and brighter about his sister, Winnie Stuart, than he had ever expected to feel. After all, he himself had only escaped the London summer for a few weeks, but Winnie and Malcolm had spent all the long vacation upon the Quantock Hills. The boy had returned to school some weeks before, and Mrs. Stuart was expected home that evening.

An engagement, which it was imperative that he should keep, prevented his greeting her at Paddington, but he hurried back, expecting to find her arrived and comfortably resting upon the Ilkley couch—the couch which he had originally bought for Cecil Gwynne.

His surprise was great when his sister met him in the hall, dressed for dinner—dressed, not in one of her invalidish teagowns, but in a dainty *demi-toilette.*

"Why, Winnie," he exclaimed, "how well you seem to be! your cheeks are quite pink, and you look ten years younger!"

"I feel ten years younger," she answered delightedly,

"but I told you in my last letter than I am getting quickly strong."

"Yes, I know, but I did not expect such a transformation as *this*." And Robert kissed his sister tenderly, and thanked God beneath his breath that he had followed the doctor's advice and left her so long in the bracing country air. It had not been easy to do so, for he had missed the quiet comfort of her presence and had found the hot summer evenings insupportably lonely. Not that he was in the habit of conversing much with Winnie, but he liked to feel that she was in the room and near at hand should he need her.

Dinner that night was the merriest that the brother and sister had ever spent together; Winnie was, Robert told her, "in great form," and gave him bright amusing sketches of the adventures which she and Malcolm had enjoyed while away. He discovered that this usually dull little sister of his had quite a gift as a *raconteuse*, and he found her brightness infectious. Several times he forgot his usual self-containment and laughed so heartily that his butler confided to the housekeeper that it was "the master who seemed twenty years younger, let alone Mrs. Stuart ten!"

Coffee had been brought up, and Mr. Saul and his sister were now alone in the drawing-room. The autumn evening was chilly and a bright fire burnt in the grate, before which Mr. Saul stood leaning his back, English fashion, against the mantelpiece. Presently he moved away and, seating himself in a large armchair, held out his hand to Winnie.

"Come here!" he said kindly, "and tell me more about these beautiful pink roses which the moorland

breezes have painted upon your cheeks; we must take care that the London fogs do not dim them. I do not want to see them fade."

Any exhibition of feeling upon the part of her reserved brother was rare, and Winnie was deeply touched by his unusual display of tenderness.

She instantly left her seat and sat upon the arm of his chair.

"They will not fade," she answered brightly, "for it is not the moorland breezes that have given them to me." She hesitated a moment, and then continued, though with some effort.

"This summer I made new friends, Robert; you remember that I spoke of them to you in my letters. The Meades——"

"Oh, yes," he interrupted, "tell me more about the Meades. They seem to have been the kindest of friends to my lonely little sister and her son."

"They have been the truest friends a woman ever had, and it is to their loving-kindness that I owe, in a great measure, my new-found health," and Winnie's face grew grave.

"And you have known them only a short time, you say! Well, I hope that I may have an early opportunity of thanking them," Robert answered heartily; "for what blessing is there to be compared to health of mind and body, and you seem to have found both." And he looked at his sister, still surprised at the change in her appearance and general tone.

"I have learnt," she answered gently, "that the two are inseparable—that the one is not, in reality, a possibility without the other."

Though her tone caught Robert's attention, he was nevertheless utterly unprepared for what followed.

"Robert," Mrs. Stuart said gravely, "it is Christian Science that is healing me. Have you ever heard of it?"

"Had he ever heard of it?" Robert held his breath. The blow was so unexpected and was moreover delivered from the last quarter in the world from which he could have anticipated any such attack. That Winnie, of all people, should have become entangled in this dangerous heresy, and without his knowledge or consent, was almost inconceivable to him. Winnie! who never spent sixpence, nor took a drive without consulting him! And did not the little fool know, he mentally exclaimed, that Christian Science had wrecked his happiness! In his rage he was, of course, unjust. His sister knew that his engagement to Cecil Gwynne had been suddenly broken off—that much he had written to tell her before her return from India. But when she had ventured shortly after her return to refer to the matter he had answered her enquiries so curtly that she had never approached the subject again; consequently she knew no details. Now Robert Saul did his best, the best he knew, that is, to curb his anger, but wild passion possessed him, and for a time he dared not speak. The veins about his temples rose into knots, and he closed his hands and held them stiff, while he locked his teeth together.

And all the time, Winnie knew nothing of the storm which raged beside her, for she was reading from a little book which she held in her hand.

"I have only read this book through once," she said,

"but it seems beautiful to me. I want you to read this first page," and she handed it, open, to Mr. Saul.

He knew it well! Another woman, also dear to him, had once put this same small volume into his hand; that time, he had refused to so much as touch it. Now, he took it and closed the cover sharply, while his face whitened and grew hard.

Very deliberately he rose from his chair and walked over to the hearth. Winnie thought that he moved towards the candles, which gave a brighter light upon the mantelpiece, in order that he might the better see to read. Instead, he stooped and took the small brass tongs which stood against the lintel, while with them he removed a large block of coal from the top of the fire.

"Simmonds *has* made an enormous fire," Mrs. Stuart said. "I wonder why servants——;" her platitude was never finished. She ceased speaking abruptly, for Robert had bent low over the fire and had deliberately placed her book in the very centre of the flame. Sheer amazement held Winnie Stuart still. But when at last her brother turned and for the first time she saw his face distinctly, she received a shock.

"Winnie." Robert Saul stopped abruptly, and moistened his lips, while the fingers of each hand dug into the palm; then for a moment he mastered his voice; "Winnie," he repeated evenly, in clear, decisive accents, "I know all about Christian Science, and I shall do that——," he jerked his head towards the soft curling ashes which marred the red glow of the fire's heart, "I shall do that," he repeated with cold distinctness, "to every book of the kind which you bring into this house."

He left the room abruptly, and one minute later Mrs. Stuart heard the hall door slam and a quick step, which she recognised as her brother's, passed the window.

At first she was too bewildered to think connectedly. Nothing seemed clear to her, except her brother's face, as she had seen it, when he had turned and spoken to her a moment ago.

He looked, she thought, just as he used to look twenty years ago, when in a passion. But surely he had long outgrown those wild rages! "Of course," she added to herself, "this fit of fury will pass quickly, just as those others did when he was a boy; and he will do, as he invariably did then, all that can be done to make up to me. He will probably," and now she smiled, "buy me a perfect mountain of Christian Science literature in place of the book which he has burnt."

Remembering that of old only one course had been possible while her brother was angered, Mrs. Stuart rose and went to her room. To leave him alone had always been, she remembered, the quickest way to cool Robert's wrath. To-morrow, he would make a point of asking her forgiveness, and all would be sunshine once more. And then she smiled again, as she remembered how her brother had always hated to "beg pardon," but had, nevertheless, sternly schooled himself into the necessary state of humility. She could see him now, as she had seen him often when a child, standing before her with his face crimson and his eyes still rebellious, blurting out, boylike, what he considered an ample apology—"Sorry, Winnie,"—and often it had happened that Winnie, with her sweet and rather shallow nature, had already forgotten the quarrel and would

be puzzled, for the moment, to remember to what he referred.

Now, she changed into a warm dressing-gown and sat before her fire, quite happy, reading her Bible. It had of late become a new book, bringing to her rest of body and calm of mind. The Gospels were, of course, all very familiar, but now the Gospel of St. John held for Winnie a new and joyous meaning, which she had never before known to be there.

"To-morrow," she mused as she closed her Bible, "all will be well, and Robert will study Christian Science with me, and we shall be happier than ever he or I have been before."

And soon she slept. Slept! when she should have watched and prayed. . . . Ah, Winnie, though thou dost not know it, because as yet thou are rousing but slowly from the Adam-dream, to-morrow will be big with blessing, or with curse, for thee and thine. For to-morrow shall come the call, "Take up the cross and follow Me." Poor sleeping child! didst not heed the warning sent thee in those words—"Not as the world giveth, give I unto you?" To thee, Winnie, much has now been given, and of thee much shall be demanded in return. Sleep not, but rise up quickly, work, watch and pray, *with all thine armour on.*

CHAPTER XXIII

DOMESTIC TYRANNY

> Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.
> —*Isaiah.*

Mrs. Stuart awoke the next morning feeling deeply depressed and very tired. She turned to the table beside her bed, meaning to open her text book. But suddenly she remembered that it had been quite destroyed the night before. Why had she not made some effort to recover it from the flames as she might have done, had she been more alert? She immediately consoled herself, however, with the thought that she would buy another that day. But as she dressed, two things occurred to her; first, she had no money of her own, and in this matter she was entirely dependent upon Robert. Her husband's sudden death had left her penniless, without even the small pittance of a widow's pension. Not that this mattered as a rule, for the ample fortune, which her brother had inherited from his godfather, brought him in a goodly income, and he was one of those men who delight in spending their money lavishly upon those whom they love. He gave his sister splendid presents at all sorts of unexpected times. He would have thought it absurd to await her birthday or the arrival of a festive season, before presenting her with the beautiful little victoria, in which

she drove daily. He always insisted that she should have all that she needed, and that it should be the best of its kind. He never would allow her to travel in a second-class carriage, but always paid liberally for the restful comfort of a "first," with the magic word "engaged" slanting across the window pane. To her maid he paid high wages in order that Mrs. Stuart might be carefully waited upon. Indeed, he ungrudgingly spent so much money upon her comfort, surrounding her with every luxury, that Winnie often told her brother that he must not spoil her. Malcolm's school expenses he made entirely his own affair, and believing firmly that the foundation stones of a boy's education must be well laid, he willingly expended a larger sum upon his nephew than many a parent would have considered at all necessary. And yet, in spite of his magnificent generosity, his sister seldom had the personal control of sixpence. All bills were sent in to Mr. Saul, and a liberal cheque drawn should she be away from home, but her brother expected, and always obtained from her, an accurate account of her expenditures upon these occasions. It is doubtful if he himself knew why he held the purse strings so entirely in his own hands. Probably he did not examine his motive. Life to him was a matter of perpetual activity, and he spared himself very little time for introspection. But his method was consistent with his character, the dominant note of which was a habit of despotism.

The second point, which occurred to Mrs. Stuart as her maid wound her pretty soft hair around her head, was that she had no idea where to purchase another copy of "Science and Health." She was a very young

student of Christian Science, and though she had felt its power, her natural laziness had made her slow to take up her own work. Dimly she discerned something of the beauty of this new religion, for she had already proved its power to be Love. Was it not restoring her to health, and at the same time revealing to her awakening consciousness that God is a God of Love alone? But though Winnie Stuart had distinctly heard the voice of Truth calling her, she was still only stirring in her sleep, and her eyes were heavy with the thraldom of the past and the slumber of the ages.

Now she went down to breakfast and began to chatter to her brother, just as though there had been no storm the night before. But he scarcely answered her. Indeed Mr. Saul looked weary, as even a strong man may after a great conflict, especially when he is the loser.

Not that Robert Saul supposed himself to have lost the battle. On the contrary, he was secretly proud that he had found the courage to stand firm, and it was in a tone of some curtness that he told his sister, directly the meal was over, that he wished to speak to her in his study. Mrs. Stuart immediately rose. It would have been unnatural to her to disobey, as she had been subject to her brother's rule almost ever since she could speak. True, during the few years of her married life, she had been somewhat emancipated, but only to a certain extent. Old habits take long in the uprooting, and she had hardly been under her brother's roof a week, on her return from India, before she resumed her rôle of gentle obedience as naturally as possible.

Mr. Saul opened the study door and stood aside

with punctilious politeness, as his sister entered. Then he immediately followed and closed the door. He did not look at Winnie, however, but walked to the window and fixed his eyes upon the dreary scene without. It was a miserable day; drip, drip, the rain fell, and all the air was dark. A wretched woman, passing, paused and raised a face yellow with starvation. Her wan appearance irritated Mr. Saul, and opening the window sharply he threw her half a crown. It was against his principles to be thus indiscriminate in his charity, but the woman's appearance had momentarily reminded him of Winnie; nothing definable, but just that touch of likeness in face and form, which claims the attention of the observant. Mr. Saul was unusually observant this morning—his every sense seemed quickened. He noticed with annoyance that his orders had been overlooked in the small matter of window curtains. They should have been changed yesterday. To-day, they appeared to be a great deal less white than when he had called his housekeeper's attention to them twenty-four hours ago because they were not up to the mark of spotlessness which he demanded.

He stood for a long time silently before the window, his great form blocking out much of what little light there was upon this dark autumn morning.

Meanwhile, Winnie waited quietly enough. Upon entering the room, she had seated herself in the large chair which stood beside the fire. She was not looking at her brother at all, and, when at last he spoke, she was a little startled.

Was this Robert's voice? The usually rich tones were now harsh and discordant, and he seemed to speak with difficulty.

Mrs. Stuart was not a woman of much penetration, but of late she had begun to understand those around her much more easily; and she now became aware that her brother was suffering.

"Winnie," he said, "I have thought this matter out —you must choose between me and Christian Science!"

"What do you mean?" she gasped, in simple perplexity.

"I mean," he repeated slowly, "precisely what I say; you must choose between me—between this house, for instance—and Christian Science."

For fully a minute Winnie Stuart did not reply. When she did, Robert Saul was amazed. He thought he knew his docile sister so well, that now he almost doubted his hearing. Winnie had risen and stood silently before him. Her face was very white. For the time, at any rate, the bright roses had faded. Presently she spoke.

"I choose," she said in strong clear accents, "Christian Science."

The brother and sister faced each other. Neither moved, neither spoke, for quite a while. Then slowly the blood mounted to Robert's face, and he struck a blow which he believed would be quite final. But he did not look at the woman before him as he spoke; he was ashamed, quite consciously ashamed, and yet . . . he did it.

"You must choose between *Malcolm* and Christian Science!"

There was now a complete silence—a silence pregnant with the issues of life and death, though neither the man nor the woman knew it then. The rain continued to beat its dreary dirge upon the window pane;

a hansom drove rapidly by; a half-drenched pedestrian hurried past the window and glanced curiously at the tall form within the room; and still neither the man nor the woman spoke.

The clock struck ten, and Mr. Saul, suddenly mindful of another engagement, broke the long silence.

"I will give you," he said, "five minutes in which to decide whether you will give up this nonsense, or render your child penniless and homeless."

Winnie stood up very straight, and looked, for her, quite tall.

"I will work for Malcolm," she said.

"Work?" Mr. Saul laughed aloud, intending his sister to hear him, as she left his presence; intending her to suffer as she heard.

"Work for Malcolm!" Where and how did the silly creature suppose that she could earn enough to feed the child, much less to educate him! And Mr. Saul thought of the last cheque which he had drawn during the summer holidays. Pshaw! She would come to her senses in time, and it would no doubt help her to do so, if he were to show her that last counterfoil. He unlocked a drawer in his writing-table and drew from it his cheque book. A file of papers caught his eye and selecting one, he went in search of his sister, whom he found in her sitting-room.

In justice to the man it must be remembered that he himself was suffering. But he was of the kind who would literally have cut off the right hand, had he deemed it his duty to do so. In one way, he had been born too late. He had the splendid courage that goes to the making of a martyr, coupled with a fervent devotion to his religion; and if his character was marred

by harshness and a lack of breadth, this was more the inevitable outcome of the life which he had led, than inherent to his nature.

He stood before his sister for a moment, holding out a receipted bill.

"Look," he said, "and tell me how you propose to earn enough to settle such accounts as this."

Winnie Stuart took the paper and glanced at it. She breathed a little quickly when next she spoke.

"I had no idea," she said, "that a preparatory school cost so much."

"It depends on the school," Mr. Saul answered shortly. "Come, Winnie," he added more pleasantly, "you can't seriously contemplate the ruin of Malcolm's career. You know how clever the boy is; you know how much his future means to me. Probably——" Mr. Saul paused for a moment, and then added in a tone of some emotion, "or perhaps you do *not* know, because it is hard for me to speak of these things, but . . . I love the child as if he were my own. If you will give up this——" he hesitated, and then found the word he sought, "this aberration, Malcolm shall be to me as a son, and neither you nor he shall ever have one moment's anxiety about ways and means."

"Thank you, Robert," his sister replied with sweet gravity, "but you ask that which I have no power to grant. I understand very little of this new thought, but it has done for me in a short time more than ever my religion did before. It has made me happier and stronger than I have ever been; it has given me a——"

"Then we will not waste time over a useless discussion." Mr. Saul spoke hastily again: "And what,

may I ask, do *you* propose to do? I shall at once send off the necessary notice, in order that Malcolm may leave school as soon as possible."

"I propose," Mrs. Stuart answered, "to consult my friends the——"

"A telegram for you, madam;" and Mrs. Stuart turned to find the maid at her elbow.

She took the missive with some surprise, for she seldom, if ever, received a wire, and her face whitened as she read the message.

Robert, watching her, turned sharply to the servant. "That will do," he said, "I will ring if there is any answer."

As the maid closed the door, Mr. Saul crossed the room, and spoke gently to his sister, for he himself was not free from anxiety.

"Malcolm is all right? Surely, Winnie, it is not from the school?"

Mrs. Stuart handed him the telegram, saying;

"I will go to my bedroom, Robert, I want to be quite alone."

Mr. Saul read rapidly the few short sentences written upon the flimsy paper in his hand; "Unexpectedly leaving England immediately, am writing and sending you the particulars you need. Meade."

"Excellent," he said aloud, "this will settle the matter." He left the house a few minutes later, satisfied that all would come about as he wished, and as he walked round to the vestry meeting at which he was somewhat overdue, he wondered whether he *could* give up Malcolm should Winnie persist in her folly? The child was one after his own heart, in whom he loved to trace a likeness to himself. That the lad had brains no

one could doubt, though the father had been a very average man, and Winnie was certainly not clever.

Most people stood somewhat in awe of Mr. Saul, but Malcolm, though he had at first felt timid in his uncle's presence, had gradually been drawn towards him. He felt the love which Robert silently cherished for him, and he would now unhesitatingly approach his uncle at all times, even invading the strict privacy of his study uninvited, till Robert Saul had grown to look forward to the holidays and to the long winter and early spring evenings, when Malcolm, book in hand, would curl himself upon the study hearth. Sometimes he would lie there reading for hours, sometimes he would enter into strange, thoughtful conversations with the reticent man, who was seemingly never too busy to answer his questions and who was, moreover, always able to explain those difficult matters, which other people did not appear to understand. Often they would go out upon the balcony and study the starlit heavens, and in time Malcolm became quite wise and talked so naturally of matters usually unapproached by a child of his age, that his uncle found in him a source of perpetual delight.

A short walk now brought the Vicar to his Church, and as he entered he comforted himself with the reflection that it was not he who had to choose between his religion and his desire. Things were shaping very nicely, and Winnie would soon behave sensibly; especially now that these objectionable new friends of hers were leaving England, for she would have no one but himself to lean upon.

That afternoon, while he and his sister were seated at tea, the maid entered with the five o'clock post.

Several letters for Mr. Saul and only a postcard for Mrs. Stuart.

Winnie paused in the act of pouring out her brother's tea, to take her card from the maid, but she did not look at it as she laid it upon the table beside her.

The postmark was a particularly distinct one, and Mr. Saul instantly observed it.

"Winnie," he said, as, leaning over, he took up the card, "this is only a postcard and is evidently from your friends the Meades. May I read it?"

Mrs. Stuart was a little surprised, but it was at all times easier for one of her lethargic disposition to consent to, rather than dissent from, another's wishes, and so she nodded silently.

As he read, the devil, as Mr. Saul afterwards declared, entered into him and used him to strike a blow which one day came home to roost.

Upon the card were written a few hurried lines only, an intimation of regret that the writer had not time to enter into detail, but was sending the address from which Mrs. Stuart could obtain all the information which she needed in order to follow up her study of Christian Science.

Reading this, Mr. Saul at once realised that he had wasted his energy, when, in the passion of the moment, he had the night before burnt Winnie's text book, for now she could easily obtain another copy and, it appeared, make the acquaintance of as many of these objectionable people as she chose. "But," the devil whispered, "she has not read the card, and the writer is leaving England. Before he can write again, or she can obtain the address by making other enquiries,

Winnie will see the matter in its proper light, and Malcolm will not be separated from you, but will become unto you even as a son." Scenes from the past thronged through the now open door and tugged at the man's heartstrings. He *must have Malcolm.* The boy's pale, clever face, alight with intelligence as he remembered it to have been that night when they both became so interested while discussing stars of the fourth and fifth magnitude, rose before Mr. Saul, and he knew that he could not let Malcolm go. Neither was it possible to such a man, in such a mood, to take what would have seemed to him to be a retrogressive step. He had placed his ultimatum before his sister, and by it they must both abide.

So he looked Mrs. Stuart straight in the face, for he became less ashamed each time he hurt her, and said, "I do not wish you to read this postcard so I intend to destroy it!" And before Winnie could utter a protest by word or deed, he had quietly placed the card in the breast pocket of his coat.

Winnie understood at once that to attempt to regain possession of her property by force would be absurd. Robert was the most stalwart man she knew. He would not need to do more than stand firm and passively resistant, while she should expend her woman's strength in the futile endeavour to obtain that which he did not intend her to have. Besides such a proceeding would have been completely foreign to her. She was too sensible to even argue about the matter.

"You should not have done that, Robert," she said quietly.

Mr. Saul, though he would never have admitted it,

felt more rebuked than he could have supposed possible.

"I must help you," he answered instantly, "while you are unable to see clearly enough to help yourself. Upon the day that you promise me to drop this blasphemous creed I will return your property."

Mrs. Stuart did not answer a word, but turning helplessly away she left the room.

. . . . . .

Poor slumbering child, with the dream of ages in thine eyes! Frail mortal, burdened with the finite thought of personal control: what canst thou do?

Listen, my sister; there is a great highway which lies wide open and leads unto the endless day—"the way of holiness"—and "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Wake! little sister, wake! Quickly, while there yet is time, "gird up the loins of your mind," "arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Part IV

BROKEN SHUTTLES UPON THE TABLE OF TIME

CHAPTER XXIV

THE RECANTATION

> These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.
>
> —*Jesus.*

"WINNIE," Robert Saul spoke gently, when some hours later he bade his sister good-night, "I have been thinking this matter over again, and I feel so sure that you will be guided by me, that we will leave things as they are for a week. At the end of that time, I know that you will do as I wish."

Mrs. Stuart did not answer, but kissed her brother quietly and went rather wearily upstairs.

The next day there began for Winnie Stuart a time of mental persecution which can only be understood by those who have been tried in a like fire; and all the time Robert Saul believed that he was serving his God. Even though he saw his sister's new-found health rapidly failing, he somehow convinced himself that anything were better than such a life as she would lead, were he to allow her to embrace this heretical creed. Every weapon that the carnal mind could devise and forge of cruelty, it used, and found in him a ready tool; scourges, woven of bitter derision—a very refinement of insult—cold neglect, born partly of a half-uncon-

scious determination to make her bend her will to his, partly of his inability to understand how fearful was the pain which he daily—nay, hourly—inflicted upon this gentle nature. And the devil put ready to his hand a knotted cord of awful weight—Malcolm. Robert Saul spared the mother's loving heart not one single fear that his rampant thought could conjure up. He painted, with all the power of his wonderful eloquence, the child's future, despised, ill-educated, hungry, perhaps even degraded.

Winnie bore it all without a word. But one night she wept herself to sleep and woke the next day weary and afraid, for to-day Robert would ask her decision. Then, in her pain, she murmured and sought to justify herself; "If only she had known the Meades longer! If only she could go to them! If only she understood this new thought better and could apply it when in need!" But why did she not understand this new thought better? Why could she not apply it when in need? Was it not because, when with the Meades, she had yielded to a natural laziness and had not made any real effort for herself and had thus neglected one of those golden opportunities which, once lost, can only be regained through sore trial and tribulation? She had not begun really to *study* Christian Science, before her brother had wrenched the text book from her hand; and the habit of her life was strong upon her and—Robert hurt her every hour of the day!

Still she did not waver, for already, though she had understood so little, she realised that much indeed had been given to her in those few wonderful months, and that Christian Science held for her that which she had not supposed that life upon earth could hold for any-

one. Yet she feared to rely utterly upon it, while Science, and Science alone, could have sustained her through the ordeal which now confronted her.

Here Winnie Stuart made the mistake of her life; a mistake arising out of that strange obstinacy, which weak natures misname strength. She surrendered herself to the subtle power of the human will; *nay, she even called it to her aid,* and told herself again and again, that she *would not* give in; rather, she would bear anything; *for once Robert should see that her will was equal to his own!* Thus, trusting to a support which was wholly mortal, she was all unprepared for the fierce trial which awaited her. Nor did she fortify herself as she might have done: day after day her Bible had remained unopened, and she made no effort at all to replace her text book.

But how had Robert Saul spent that night? He left his study late, only to return within the hour; for he found that he could not sleep. Then it was that subtle Evil dressed itself in seeming white, as it loves best to do, and crept upon its silent way with soft and sinuous tread, till it paused before an open door called Hate. "Ah," it murmured gleefully, "I know my way in here right well!" Within the door it paused and announced itself—"Religion." Then sat itself upon the lap of man and darted poison in his ear. "You love your sister," it softly said; "and you must save her from this thing which you so justly hate, for you best can serve your God by saving her, if need be, from herself. The means you ask? why, all are fair to win a soul from hell!" And the face of Evil glowed with an unholy light; and the heart of Evil laughed, and laughed again, as it saw that man was fast asleep

and dreamed he spoke to Good. "The means?" man muttered; "tell me where they may be found, and I will use them, though it should cost me all I love!"

Softly Evil placed its poisoned lips upon the ear of man and whispered, in a voice whose triumph it could scarce conceal, the name of one whom Winnie held most dear. But the face of man grew white and horror-struck; "Tell me," he said, "some other way, I dare not use the child."

"Hast thou forgot?" and the lying voice, which always apes the truth, made subtle answer to his fear. "Hast thou forgot, 'a little child shall lead them'?"

The head of man sank low upon his breast and he muttered in his heart, "I had forgot! to-morrow—I —will—act."

Thus Evil, having twisted to its lying heart's content the word of Good, laughed low, and, wise as are the children of this world, it crept away *nor marred its work by overwork.*

Thus the morrow was, for Robert Saul, a day of mighty triumph; followed by a night of weeping!

Malcolm was up for his half-term holiday, and directly after lunch Mr. Saul took the child into his study. Winnie beckoned the boy back as he turned at the door, and smiling, he kissed his hand to her.

"In a minute, mother," he called in sweet, clear accents, and then the door closed upon him.

The minutes passed into an hour, and the hour into two, and still Malcolm did not return.

At last Mrs. Stuart, unable to remain longer alone, went to the study and brought the child away.

His face was aflame and his eyelids wet with tears,

and scarcely had they entered the drawing-room, before he turned and rent his mother, as I have seen a hound worry a wounded hare.

"Mother," he said in a voice so hard that Winnie wondered, *was it really her child who spoke?* "You must give up Christian Science, or I shall hate you! I shall hate you, forever and forever!" The boy's face quivered in his rage and pain, and now his voice was low and fierce—almost a snarl.

Winnie reeled as though she had been struck.

"Hush! Malcolm," she whispered. "Oh, hush!" and she raised her hands as though to ward off some foul blow. "You do not know what it is you say to me."

"I know very well." The boy flung the words at her, while his eyes blazed and his little form grew rigid with the passion of a fancied wrong. "I know very well that if I do not go to school and learn like other boys, that I shall grow up a dunce; Uncle Robert says so; and all the other boys will laugh—but they shall *not* laugh at me."

Winnie did not hear him now. One sentence only rang within her ear, and struck with cruel force upon her heart. "I shall hate you! I shall hate you, forever and forever!" She had borne so much, but this she could not bear! The child meant what he said; she knew that, for she knew that he was of the temperament to bear the burden of a grudge for long.

"Wait here, Malcolm," she said, with a calmness which was all assumed, "I will speak to your uncle;" and she left him and crossed the hall, but twice she swayed as she passed from room to room.

And still she did not look for aid to the Power which alone can help man in his greatest need!

Entering the study, she shut the door and waited for a moment silently before her brother. Though neither knew it then, she stood at the cross-roads in her life and chose the one that leads to death.

For still she did not look for succour to the Power which held it ready to her hand, could she but have trusted *all* to Love.

A voice finally broke the silence. Seemingly the voice was not her own; and yet it must be; but she thought she heard it from a distance, as though another spoke.

"I have come to say, . . . the choice appears to lie between Christian Science and the love of my child; I choose," she moistened her lips, and Robert had to bend a little forward to hear the last few words, "I choose—God forgive me for it—I choose the—love—of—my—child!"

As she spoke those last words, Winnie stood for a moment upright, then slowly she leant back, still holding herself rigidly straight, against the closed door: suddenly she threw out an arm upon either side, and with nervous grasp held each lintel fast. Her face was drawn, and quite slowly her eyelids dropped upon her eyes. Her white dress hung in straight folds about her, and thus her figure formed the impress of a human cross against the dark oak panels.

Robert leant forward and called her sharply by her name, and, at that moment, a picture was painted upon his mind which was one day to arise and torture him, as he had tortured Winnie; full measure he one

day received—"good measure, pressed down, and shaken together."

Even now he suffered, though he would not let his sister see it. This thing that God demanded of him, was almost the hardest He had asked as yet; but He should not find him wanting—he would obey. Rather had he plucked out his right eye than hurt the sister whom he loved; but God ordered otherwise and—he must obey. He must recall this straying lamb and bring her back, if need be, by the scourge and cross into the only true fold.

. . . . . .

Three doctors stood around her bed, but Winnie took no note of them; "The wages of sin," she murmured, through parched and quickly moving lips, "the wages of sin is death;" and once, and once again, "whosoever killeth you shall think that he doeth God service."

. . . . . .

Four black frock coats! Three kind and thoughtful faces, the fourth, stern and white.

"And what," Mr. Saul asked, "has caused my sister's death?"

"Undoubtedly some shock." One man answered for all, and all agreed. Then he continued, "There is every appearance of great nervous suffering. Doubtless," he added kindly, "Mrs. Stuart felt her husband's sudden death very much. I was attending her when she received the news, you remember."

"Her husband's death!" Robert seemed to himself to laugh, but in a horrid, silent way. His face, he knew, was grave and motionless. Her husband had died a year ago and more!

"Yes," he answered steadily, deliberately accentuating what he knew to be a lie. "No doubt, it was 'her husband's death';" and it seemed to him that something within him laughed again, but this time louder than before, for had he not seen Winnie bright and well only a week ago—a year and more after her husband's death!

. . . . .

Poor Winnie—poor weak child—tried in the fire and found wanting! Couldst thou but have borne the cross and despised the shame a little longer, Love held for thee a glorious crown. Poor little suffering one, fast-locked within the deep mesmeric sleep, close prisoned in the vault of dark oblivion, while yet on earth! . . . Death has delayed thy journey upwards for awhile, for thou hast bowed to him, while man should bend the knee to Life and Life alone. Poor little one! Death, man's most cruel and relentless foe, cannot but darken his path, and turn his face from God. Let him not dream that it will help him to ascend; rather does it drag him down and rock him deeper in the Adam-sleep. False friend, made all of lies! But take thou heart, dear little one. God is everywhere and loves thee well. I know not where thou art, nor upon what plane of thought thy work must now be done. But this I know, that God is everywhere and waits to wrap thee in His love. The problem has been worked out wrong and must be done aright; *but the Principle remains the same*, and thou must start afresh and do thy work again. Fear thou not, but turn thy face about and speed thy faltering steps towards the throne of grace. Thy recantation has cost thee

dear and made thy journey longer than it need have been; but fear thou not. For unto seventy times seven shalt thou be forgiven. Listen, little sister! Thou didst fear, and fear is sin. . . . *But much more did thy brother sin against thee even unto death.* But to what hast thou succumbed? To naught but to a false and uncrowned king; to naught but to a great usurper whom men obey, *because they think they must.*

Awake! Awake! thou Christian world. Rise up and kill the devil Fear, who chains thee prostrate to the earth, before this phantom king, whom men call Death. But where then is his sceptre? and *who gave it him?* What then is his mandate? where his jurisdiction? *Who gave him either?* What then is this thing which men call Death? In truth, 'tis nothing but delusion, a thing of naught, because it comes not from the only God; what is it but a giant lie, child of the devil—False Belief.

Oh, haste thee, haste! thou Christian world, arise and pray. Wrap thee round in robes of Light, for only thus canst thou safely war against the lie. Rise up and sweep the shadows from the past. In holy rebellion, rise up and slay. For long ago the fiat was sent forth! "Hear, O Israel: the Lord Thy God is one Lord." *There is no other:* and, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Hear, and understand, thou sleeping world! For, ringing down throughout the ages, comes the mighty voice of God, stirring to joyous action those who watch, and work, and pray. What says the majesty of mind?—"Remove the diadem and take off the crown," till He whose right it is shall reign. Thus shall be brought

to pass the saying; "Death is swallowed up in victory." Awake! thou sleeping world, and hold thy thought to Life, for thus only shall the corruptible become the incorruptible; thus only can the mortal put on immortality!

CHAPTER XXV

HATE

Something the heart must have to cherish,
Must love, and joy, and sorrow learn.
Something with passion clasp and perish
And in itself to ashes burn.

—*Longfellow.*

Mr. Saul returned from his sister's funeral feeling anxious about his little nephew. Malcolm had not, to his knowledge, shed a single tear, nor had he voluntarily made a remark, since his mother's death. Robert did not know much about children it is true, but he felt that it would have been more natural had the child cried his heart out for a day or two and then become comparatively cheerful. But Malcolm was at all times unlike other children, and his uncle was puzzled to know how to handle him. His longing was to keep the boy by his side, for it was only now that he began to realise how lonely he himself was, and how much he had formerly depended upon Winnie's gentle, loving presence. So far he had found himself quite unable to settle down to his usual routine of work or reading. Instead of spending some hours a day in his study, he moved restlessly from room to room, writing a note here, reading a few chapters of some book there. At times he would suddenly leave the house and take a long walk, usually very late at

night, when the streets were comparatively deserted. It was at this period of Robert Saul's life that this restless habit first became established; later it ruled him against his will, as the despot rules the slave, calling him forth night after night while others slept. Just now the mental disturbance caused by his sister's sudden death was accentuated by a shock which he received soon afterwards.

A foreign letter, bearing many postmarks, was handed to him one evening by the postman as he entered his house. It was addressed to Mrs. Stuart, care of her Calcutta agent. Upon opening it, Mr. Saul found that it bore the signatures of a firm of lawyers in China. He had barely read two lines, before he let the thin sheet of closely written notepaper flutter to the floor. But he was not the man to shirk an unpleasant duty, and so he picked up the letter and read it to the end.

That night he sat in his study for hours and fought out a big fight. The early morning found him in his great armchair and still awake. At last he roused himself from his long reverie and put the letter away in his most private drawer.

"I will invest it well for the boy," he thought, "so that when he is of age he will come into his own with interest. But I will not tell him that he has been left his paternal uncle's heir. I am his guardian, and he shall believe himself to be dependent upon me; and thus he will learn to lean upon me, and love *me* better than anyone else in all the world! I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son, and all I shall ever ask in return will be his love and his obedience."

Something Robert Saul must have to love, but that something must be all his own and must love him supremely and, loving, must lean upon him and obey *him* first of all.

What more, Robert Saul, could you ask of anyone? and what hope have you that you will gain either love or obedience by initiating a course of deception unworthy of your love? Yet so closely does error ape the *word* of Good that this man, hungering righteously enough for the innocent love of a little child, believed himself to be using means justified by the end in view. Self-mesmerism! Arch-deception! what evil is there to equal the work of thy mesmeric hand?

From this moment Mr. Saul deteriorated morally, though so subtle is the lie, that he recognised no downward step until one day, when bound and manacled with sin, he looked back at that which he once had been; aye, and at that which he had meant to be!

It was a week since Winnie's funeral, and Robert Saul called Malcolm into his study and told him that he had decided not to send him back to school, but himself to prepare him for Winchester.

The boy's face fell, but the iron of poverty had ground quickly and deeply into his heart, and he supposed that it would save his uncle money, and that therefore he could not protest. For was he not penniless and dependent for his very food upon his generosity? Remembering later that Mr. Saul was both rich and kind, he was puzzled, and inclined to discard this explanation of his uncle's action, but no other occurred to the child's mind, and so, as is often the case, viewing the matter from a wrong point, he accepted an erroneous conclusion.

That night Malcolm had been in bed quite an hour but was not sleeping, when Mr. Saul came into his room and sat beside his bed.

"Little man," he said very kindly, "I have come to tell you that you and I are both lonely people now, so shall we not love each other a great deal and take each other away for the Christmas holidays? To Italy perhaps! And then——"

"Shall I live with you always, Uncle Robert?" the child interrupted, fixing large dry eyes upon the man who now bent over his bed and kissed him so tenderly.

"Always, Malcolm, except when you are at your public school and afterwards at the University."

"And I shall not grow up a dunce, or be very, very poor?"

Mr. Saul winced as he heard the child repeat his own words.

"No, Malcolm," he answered quickly, "you shall have a splendid education and be quite rich one day."

With a half hysterical embrace, which Robert took for the manifestation of pure affection, the boy put both arms round his uncle's neck and clung to him.

"Oh," he cried, choking with dry, unchildlike sobs, "I am so glad I have got you, Uncle Robert."

Mr. Saul did not answer, but laid the little lad back upon his bed and sat by his side for a few moments longer, soothing and comforting him with words so loving and so gentle that they would have amazed even those who knew him best.

It was dusk now, and neither perceived the figure of a woman in nurse's uniform standing outside the bedroom door. She stood listening intently to every word that passed, and as she listened, her hard and colour-

less face took on a calculating look. Mr. Saul was now singing to the child in low, melodious tones a beautiful lullaby, and as he sang he gently smoothed the boy's thick hair. The woman turned cautiously and crept quietly downstairs.

Lifting her small bag from the hall chair, she pulled down her veil and let herself out of the front door.

"Good-bye," she said to the butler, who entered the hall at that moment, "I am called to another case, which, from all I hear, will end as this has done. I will send for my box." She walked swiftly down the street and summoned a passing hansom. Giving her directions to the driver, she glanced up to make sure that the trapdoor was shut before she drew an envelope from her pocket; opening it, she took out a letter and read it once through. "Yes," she decided, "I shall risk it,—two birds in the bush for me, especially as I am not sure of the *one* in the hand! A year hence, perhaps sooner, this should be worth a lot of money," and she replaced the sheet of white paper, upon each side of which a few lines were written, in its cover and carefully locked it away in her bag.

Arriving at her destination, this woman took into the sick room, where love was the supreme need, a depressing mental atmosphere of death, dishonesty and greed.

But here let us pause long enough to pay a loving tribute to those numberless good women—those other nurses who lay down their lives in ceaseless labour for the sick, ministering to the mind and body diseased. With quiet heroism, which lets not the left hand know what the right hand doeth, they hourly perform duties which exhaust the nerves and wear out the body.

Only one who has been soothed by the gentleness and love of some such ministering sister, can realise how earnestly they endeavour to ease the world's great pain. To them, let all gratitude and honour be freely given. But, oh! the pity of it! that they should not know, or knowing, should not choose the better way, for thus man finds that obedient to the law of *Justice* and of Love his strength is ever equal to his need.

CHAPTER XXVI

CASTLES BUILT UPON SHIFTING SANDS

Unless you can love as the angels may, . . . O do not call it loving.

—*Mrs. Browning.*

Malcolm and his uncle spent the first part of the Christmas holidays in Italy, that land of silvern sky and blue water. Together they took long walks and held sage, old-fashioned converse among the orange groves of Rapallo. Sometimes the child, who had an ardent beauty-loving nature, would hold the man's hand hard and pause to bury his face deep in a thick cluster of tea roses, whose lovely buds of palest terra-cotta, creaming into white, charmed him by the beauty of their curves and colour, and the delicacy of their rich perfume. From Italy they went to Crete, to Athens, and to Smyrna; and closer grew the bond between them. As tenderly as any woman could have done, this stern man, who scarcely spoke to anyone, cared for the motherless child. Father and son, all supposed them to be. Malcolm developed during this journey into a perpetual note of interrogation, but he never seemed to weary his kind guardian. Sometimes, a rare delight, he would be allowed to sit up late, and then beautiful talks about nature's mysteries above, below, and all around them would ensue.

Mr. Saul delighted in giving instruction to the child, who was remarkably clever. It was pure pleasure to this reticent man to unfold his ideas before a condition of mind so receptive as was Malcolm's. He promised himself the joy of preparing the boy for a brilliant career. He would—certainly must—take a scholarship at Winchester and, later, at the University. Time enough then, to decide in what line he should specialise, but not unnaturally, Mr. Saul mentally mapped out a life of honour and renown in the Church of England for him. Thus Malcolm daily became more and more an integral part of his uncle's inmost life.

And if a gnawing doubt would sometimes whisper in the man's ear, he quickly and sternly ordered it away. What if Malcolm's face was pale? What if deep rings of violet marked a circle beneath his eyes? His mother's skin had been extremely fair, and so was Malcolm's, that was all! This constant travelling was perhaps too exciting for so intelligent a child. They would go home and settle down to steady work, and then the boy would eat and sleep like others of his age.

Work, Robert Saul! when all the time the child is needing childish play and the rough and tumble of a schoolboy's life! O fond and blind! Letting thy every wish be father to thy thought! Does no memory stir within thy heart? Hast thou forgotten that other boy, too sensitive of nerve, too large of head, who stood, as Malcolm stands to-day, the victim of a hot-bed growth? That boy (thou surely must remember!) was saved by the normal life of boyish games and the give-and-take of boarding school. Hast thou forgotten that picture of the past? Then it would

seem that some sharp reminder should come thy way before it is too late!

. . . . . .

Mr. Saul and his little ward returned to London in January and soon settled down into a regular routine of lessons, at which the child worked so well and so willingly that his uncle never guessed that the demon pride was urging him on beyond his strength. How should he guess? He knew nothing of the scalding tears which fell, night after night, as the weary little head calculated for the twentieth time how soon he could be finished with his education and earn the money for his keep; for *then*, he cried in childish ignorance, I will soon pay Uncle Robert back all that I cost him now.

Yet he loved his uncle in a sort of famished way; and would have loved him more, had not something held him back; what this something was he did not know, for childlike he never analysed the wall which pride, and a man's mistake, had built between them. Then one day Mr. Saul met Lady Margaret Courcy at the house of a mutual friend, and for a time he became less observant of Malcolm. Remembering that Margaret Courcy's house was always open to him, he upbraided himself in that he had not sooner made use of her to forward his great desire.

"Fool!" he exclaimed beneath his breath, "not to have thought of this before."

The next day he called upon her, for, he argued, surely he must sooner or later meet Cecil Gwynne there.

But he did not meet her, nor did Lady Margaret ever mention her. Repeated disappointments made

him impatient, and finally he spoke to Lady Margaret of the matter near his heart.

"I want," he said, "your help; I believe that I was hasty, even prejudiced perhaps, when I broke off my engagement with Lady Cecil. I wish now to discuss the matter with her, for as she said that day, 'Surely there must be some way out of the difficulty.' I will enter into the detail of Christian Science with her and discuss it with an open mind, and maybe I shall find that I was wrong. Will you help me," he added earnestly, "and arrange a meeting in this house?"

The request was frankly proffered, but Margaret Courcy knew Mr. Saul well, and knew him to be a man not easily moved from a position once assumed.

She paused long before answering him; then lifting her clear eyes to his, "No," she said gently, "I cannot do that." There was no hesitation in her voice and Mr. Saul understood her perfectly. The blood flew into his face, and shame dropped the lids upon his eyes.

Lady Margaret knew that he had lied; knew that his mind was no more open now than it had been upon the day when he called this thing a "blasphemous creed"; knew that he so desired to win Cecil Gwynne for his wife that he, Robert Saul, had stooped to the use of a subterfuge!

He had not fully known this himself, until he stood there silently awaiting Margaret Courcy's answer. Now he saw himself as something to be despised, and it angered him and caused him stubbornly to pursue his purpose. He declared that the end should justify the means, and that the regaining of a woman such as

Cecil Gwynne to the true faith was a work which God would surely bless.

He left Lady Margaret's house, and went direct to Grosvenor Square.

"Lord Brecon?" he asked. The man immediately opened the library door and showed him in. The Earl was there and for a long time they talked, but there was never any question as to how the interview would end. Mr. Saul was by far the clever man of the two, and Lord Brecon, his mind more immersed than ever in his books, was all unready to meet a situation so unexpected as that which his old friend now presented to him. So it happened that when Cecil entered the drawing-room at five o'clock that day, she found her brother and Mr. Saul standing by the fire, chatting quietly while they awaited the arrival of the tea tray.

Her face grew suddenly grave, for, in all the world, no meeting was more unexpected than this. She went forward, however, and greeted Mr. Saul so calmly that he was a little disappointed, as he watched her narrowly while she busied herself with her duties at the table.

He was surprised to find how difficult the situation had suddenly become. He had not realised that the touch of Cecil's hand would throw him back so completely into the past. He found that he spoke with embarrassment, and was inclined to let Lord Brecon and his sister sustain the conversation. Lady Cecil's perfect self-possession, however, inevitably set him at ease, and soon the three were discussing matters of common interest to the world in which they moved. He was, however, inwardly excited to a degree quite

beyond his experience of himself, and was consequently glad to fall in with Lord Brecon's suggestion that they should walk as far as his club together.

Bidding his hostess a formal adieu, he left the room with the Earl, but not until he had accepted an invitation to lunch at Grosvenor Square the next day.

Lord Brecon gave the invitation, but asked his sister so pointedly whether she would be at home, that courtesy compelled her to second it.

In this way it came about that the following day found Cecil Gwynne and Robert Saul alone together once more. Robert had quietly entered the drawing-room when the Earl retreated to his library directly after luncheon. It was not Mr. Saul's way to beat about the bush, and immediately he found himself alone with Cecil Gwynne, he told her why he was there.

"I have come," he spoke calmly, though he found that his voice was not entirely under control, "to ask you if you will explain Christian Science to me. I have been brought into close contact with it of late and I want to know more about it." So cleverly does self-deception do its work that for the moment he meant what he said, and believed, or almost believed, that he had brought with him an open mind.

Cecil Gwynne hesitated. That which had seemed possible to her a year ago was no longer so, for her growth, though slow, had been straight and sure. Some higher motive must be the impelling and compelling force, before she could respond to any such request as Robert now made. Still, who was she to judge her brother hastily? So she talked to him of that which had become her very life, and so en-

grossed was she by the interest of her subject, that the man to whom she spoke became to her simply as one who needed help, and in so far as it was purely personal, the past and future faded from her thought.

But it was not so with Robert Saul. He scarcely heard a word she said. Indeed he made no further effort than that demanded by common politeness to take part in the conversation, but gave himself up to the pleasure of once more being with Cecil Gwynne. More desirable than ever she seemed to him to be; and he watched her as she sat there, with the bright light of the fire playing round her feet and making dancing shadows upon her dress.

Outside the air was hopelessly darkened by a fog, unusually dense even for London, and Cecil had early ordered the curtains to be drawn. The room was full of light and colour, for she loved both and had the rare gift of filling her rooms with them to an extent which created contentment, but never a sense of surfeit, even in the minds of the most critical of her visitors. Robert, seated luxuriously upon a couch, abandoned himself to the joy of the hour. He deliberately silenced each scruple that arose and faced him, and, as he watched Cecil's sweet face, now grave, now full of joy, he thought only of his love for her and scarcely heard a word she said. She loves me, he thought, and is glad that I have come. Thus egotism whispered in his ear and filled his heart with that which he wished to believe the truth.

That was a red letter day for Robert Saul, or so he thought at the time.

He returned home to find Malcolm eagerly awaiting him at the tea table.

"Look, Uncle!" he exclaimed, "what I have done."

Mr. Saul took the paper which the boy held out, and even he, who knew the child so well, was surprised at that which the young hand had laid upon it.

"My boy," he said gravely, "this is excellent, and I am very pleased."

Commendation was rare from his uncle, and Malcolm's eyes glistened as he slowly waded through the bread and butter which his uncle placed before him. He was not hungry, he seldom was, and he knew that if he dawdled long enough over one slice he would not be observed, nor told to take a second.

After the boy had gone to bed, Mr. Saul examined the problem which Malcolm had both set down and worked out, unaided, during his absence that afternoon, and he realised that it was indeed a remarkable achievement for a child so young. How thankful he was that the boy had brains! Stupidity was at all times trying to him, but in his ward it would have been unbearable.

While he sat over his desert that night, he received a letter from his lawyers suggesting to him a most advantageous investment for Malcolm's fortune. It seemed certain to yield a handsome increase. The boy would be rich one day! The capital still remained in the bankers' hands, for Mr. Saul was the last man to move hurriedly in the matter of another's money, and he must assure himself of the safety of any proposed investment, before he would withdraw one penny of the child's newly acquired wealth from the safe keeping of the bank.

Yes, things were brightening indeed. Soon Cecil would be his wife—how had he ever dreamed of life

without her?—and Malcolm, the dear little lad, as happy as ever he had been with Winnie's arms about him. For Cecil would love him and care for him as though he were her own. Years hence, when Malcolm should be like a son to them both, Robert would tell him of this rich legacy and delight him with his own with interest. But he would not tell him yet, for he wished the child to turn to him for everything, and thus learn to lean upon him for every need.

. . . And all the time a woman, colourless and hard of face, with evil in her heart, held a slip of paper which might any day meet his eye and in one moment cut asunder bonds never bound by Truth.

But Mr. Saul knew nothing of this, and so he smiled as he sipped the one glass of excellent claret which was all that he ever drank at night, and wove bright fancies into a radiant whole, which soon he meant to call his own.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE FLOOD-TIDE

There is death in the pot.

—*II. Kings.*

But very soon Mr. Saul found that he had miscalculated his powers of self-control. Since the day upon which he had lunched at Grosvenor Square, he had failed to find Lady Cecil Gwynne disengaged; he saw her and spoke to her often, but always in the presence of others, and he felt that he was not progressing in the least.

To be much with her and not to betray his purpose became each day more impossible. Then at last chance seemed to favour him. Indeed it appeared to him to be more than chance, for it seemed to him that Lady Cecil deliberately made an opportunity for them to be alone together. This, to a man of his temperament, with his whole thought held fast to the one objective, could only indicate one thing, and he instantly concluded that Cecil Gwynne was as desirous of holding close converse with him, as he was anxious to be alone with her. Thus, with the precipitation which had already cost him dear, he did not wait to feel his way, but told her that he found himself quite unable to live without her, and that he had determined not to allow any difference in their religious opinions to stand between them.

"Do you mean," Lady Cecil asked, as soon as her astonishment permitted of speech, "that you are prepared to marry a Christian Scientist?"

"I mean," he answered impetuously, "that I am prepared to marry you under any circumstances. I plead only for as little delay as possible."

But Cecil Gwynne, though she knew that she would never love any man as she loved Robert Saul, knew also that such a marriage could not lead to anything but pain. Her religion had become to her the essential of her life, inseparable from the practical details thereof; and she saw that Robert did not in the least understand this. She realised instantly that he hoped, once they were married, to mould her views to his. This she knew he could never do; and she felt certain that he would—once the first flush of his happiness in possessing her were over—try to do so and would spare no effort to bend her will to his. Much of this she tried to tell him, but he would not take the answer which she finally gave him.

He wrote to her that night a letter full of passionate pleading, even humble in its tone—a letter into which the starving man threw himself whole-souled. Every line lived with the force of his love for her, every word throbbed with his longing for her. Always eloquent, that night he surpassed himself. He was, for the time being, moved out of himself and lifted into a realm of unprejudiced thought and unselfed love.

For a day and a night, and half a day, Cecil Gwynne carried the letter with her; and her face grew stern and a little hard, by reason of the battle that raged within her heart.

If she could only be sure that Robert would keep

his word and leave her free to worship where she would! But she knew him well; knew that, though he loved her, he loved power too, for he had in the course of years formed a fixed habit of personal control which now would not brook denial.

Thus the argument went on, for she loved him second only to her God. Now Sense rose up and wooed her with its subtle smile, while whispering of the joy that might be hers, if she would but dare to take a little risk. Then with soft hand it touched another chord and prophesied of a loveless life, reminding her that she had never loved any man before, nor would again. But here Spirit made swift reply:— In Science, Man, united to his God, cannot be unloved, for he that dwells in God, dwells always in the very arms of Love. Then once more Sense, failing to entice, turned its double face about and made mournful moan of a lone old age preceded by those years of fading girlhood, wherein a woman, despised and rejected of mankind, becomes embittered of her life. But clear and sweet there sounded in her heart a message borne upon angel wings, and the voice of Truth spoke soft and low, telling her of those who serve the Master, and serving, learn that in Science there is no age nor fading flower, for man's calendar must wane when comes the understanding of Eternity.

That afternoon the Earl of Brecon sat alone deeply interested in the book before him, when his sister entered the library and said abruptly, "I am going to Invergach for a week and shall start to-night."

Lord Brecon looked up quickly. "So suddenly?" he asked. "I . . ." then he immediately changed his tone to one of quiet consent, for he read something,

though not all, of the pain in his sister's eyes. "I will see you off. Have you wired to Aunt Eleanor?"

"She is not there," Cecil replied, as she quietly left the room. "She started for Switzerland to-day, and I am glad, for I would rather be alone."

The Earl did not speak as he drove to the station with his sister that evening. Though leading a narrow, egotistical life, he was not wanting in discernment, and he felt himself to be in the presence of one of those critical situations which are best left to the management of those primarily concerned. He bought Cecil a quite unnecessary number of papers, saw that she was secure from intrusion, himself ordered her every comfort of which he could think for the journey, and finally stood silently beside her awaiting the departure of the train.

Cecil was grateful for his attention. The footman or her maid could have done for her all that he now did, but it gave her comfort to realise that her brother cared enough for her to make such a willing sacrifice of time and trouble. To a man of Lord Brecon's habits it was a considerable sacrifice, and his sister keenly appreciated his tactful kindness, the more so, perhaps, because they had quite consciously drifted far apart during the last year; the woman steadily pursuing her search for Freedom's larger life, while the man became daily more closely immeshed in toils of human mechanism. For years he had been intensely dissatisfied with his religious life and was now so weary of the many questions to which he could obtain no answer that he was rapidly retiring before the foe and seeking a fictitious peace in that mental supineness, which is unworthy of any such designation as that of

peace. But there is a vast majority, and Lord Brecon made one of them, who believe perfection to be unattainable, and therefore accept a second best, when all the time man's birthright entitles him to perfect good. His sister's religion was a matter which, not unnaturally, seriously disquieted the Earl of Brecon. True, he knew nothing of it, except what he gleaned from sermons preached against it and from antagonistic articles published occasionally in the daily papers; but it shocked him by its unorthodoxy, and it seemed to him that Cecil was pursuing a terrible, and indeed dangerous, course in following a religion which differed from that of the Catholic Church; for he believed, in spite of his perplexity, that the Catholic Church was the only true fold. He had, however, no conclusive proof to offer his sister in support of his views, and thus it was that the subject nearest to the heart of each was tacitly never referred to by either.

Much of this passed through his mind as he stood beside the carriage door waiting the lifting of the guard's green light. Now the shrill whistle sounded and the great train trembled, as it prepared to start upon its northward journey.

Lord Brecon roused himself from the anxious reverie into which he had fallen and gravely answered his sister's good-bye, kissing her gently as he did so.

Then he turned and leaving the station walked quickly westward, not staying his steps until he entered his house in Grosvenor Square.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A BARQUE—STORM-TOSSED UPON A STORMY SEA

> Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God;
> But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,
> And the rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.
>
> —*Mrs. Browning.*

NINE days had come and gone since that upon which Lady Cecil Gwynne had left London, but she remained alone at Castle Invergach, for still the battle raged between sense and Soul.

To-morrow she must return to London, for her work there needed her; but it was with a heavy heart that she rose from the table upon this, her last morning among the peaceful surroundings of the country. Not that her environment had brought her peace. Perhaps she had relied too much upon the quiet of the material conditions around her. One cannot travel away from oneself, unless one travels upwards, and so far Cecil Gwynne had failed completely to realise this.

Now she called to the black Newfoundland who invariably accompanied her upon her rambles, and leaving the small room, where she breakfasted upon the rare occasions which found her alone at Invergach, she paused upon the balcony outside, resting her folded arms, breast high, on the stone wall that curved around

its length and formed the heading of a turreted chamber below.

The dog Davie was perplexed, for his alert eye had observed his mistress continually ever since she first rose from the table, and he had seen her place biscuits in the pocket of her short tweed skirt. The day was perfect, and everything pointed to a longer walk than usual. He had no objection to *that*. Indeed, his only complaint was that they did not start at once. Eagerly watching his companion as she stood beside him, the dog awaited, with what patience he could, her order to move forward. But she did not give it.

Presently Cecil Gwynne raised her head, and gazed above the distant tree-tops, seemingly seeking to penetrate the veil of ether which curtained her vision with delusive limitations. So still she stood, and for so long, that Davie, growing restive, rose high upon his strong hind legs and gently placed his glossy paws upon the low stone wall beside her. Still she did not move, except to lift her gaze a little higher. This would not do at all! and, so deciding, Davie ventured to rest his great head softly against her breast. Ah! at last she noticed him and put her arms about his shoulders, thus drawing him a little nearer to her heart. So far, so good, but still she gave no sign of onward moving.

"Ya-wuff!" and having said so much, Davie was a little frightened and promptly closed his eyes and seemed to be most innocent.

The girl stooped and pressed a long soft kiss upon his head, but that was all. But it was not enough for Davie, because, just then, he wanted more. The sun was shining with bewitching smile, and the strong

moorland air was calling to him! What sprite of dreamy fortune had chained his mistress to this strange forgetfulness? He tried a rush down the rough stone stairs and up again; she did not even look at him! Now it became necessary to consider deeply what had best be done. Thus Davie sat upon his haunches looking very wise but not for long; with three big bounds he reached and passed the silent girl—more clumsily than he need have done—but wake the lazy lady up he must! Tearing into the house he almost instantly returned; with tail held high and shoulders proudly poised, he clattered through the hall, and dropped a large thorn stick, with deliberate noisiness, upon the paved terrace below. Ah! she moved at last and, turning, patted the expectant animal upon the head.

But she did not speak to him, not at any rate as Davie counted speech. Something she said indeed, but in sorrowful accents, unrestful and full of pain, directing her gaze the while, not at him, but away, up and on over those distant tree-tops.

"'The flesh,'" she whispered, "'lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'" Then, with visible effort, she roused herself and followed the dog, who, losing no time, now led her quickly down the steps and on towards the moor; and Davie's heart beat fast with the triumph of his canine cunning. His tail curled proudly and waved with stately grace, while his body swayed comfortably as he walked beside her, each glossy side rolling, now in, now out in turn, as is the manner with his tribe.

Then came a walk, never to be forgotten by either.

For Davie it held delights unspeakable; first came a swim in the lake, and while still some way from the bank, a deep dive, rewarded by a rich find—a large stone which he brought proudly to his lady's feet. Then a glorious shake of glistening fur which waved the better for its wetting. In time they reached the moor, and Davie's cup of joy was full! For now came mysterious hunts among the heather roots and lichen-covered rocks, varied by sharp, short gallops, there and back again. An expedition to the top of a wall, and a visit of inspection to the other side—an excursion fraught with some peril, for the wall was insecure, all weakened with old age, and very rough upon the top. And now, the crowning joy of all, an exciting hunt among the untold wonders of a disused quarry.

Davie was too happy to observe that his mistress never spoke to him as she walked steadily forward with a more purposeful step than heretofore; nor did he knew that she had a definite goal in view, and a walk of some miles before her in order to reach it.

Long ago they had left all human habitation behind. For some time the ground had been steadily rising and now they walked upon the heather-clad hills. The early promise of the day was not fulfilled. Dark clouds had gathered in the north and lay thick across the sky, while all the air was heavy with the threatening of a storm. Dull monochrome replaced the brightness of the morning's colour, for greys had chased the blues away and thrown deep shadows upon all the country side.

Davie was considering whether it was not time to rest and lunch, when his mistress called a halt, for

they had reached the plateau towards which she had been directing her steps for more than an hour. Now she threw him the biscuits and watched him as he caught them one by one. So she continued to watch him, but with preoccupation in her gaze, as he carefully selected the exact spot which he considered most suitable for his midday nap. Many times he needed to turn round and about, and much pawing of the ground was necessary, before his critical doggie mind was quite at ease; but at last he was fairly settled and curled himself contentedly down among the heather roots. He was a beautiful mass of wavy blackness, for his loose curls shone with satiny sheen wherever the fitful sunlight kissed them. With his noble head laid low upon his paws, he slept, as a good dog does, with one eye always open.

Presently Cecil turned, and dropping her plaid upon a great boulder she lay full length upon its flat surface, while once again her eyes asked questions of the sky, and still their depths were troubled by the thoughts that would not let her rest.

For long she remained almost motionless; then suddenly, she turned and hid her face upon her folded arms; and now her form quivered through and through, as the hot tears chased each other from her eyes and swept their way across her face. It was the sudden breaking of the storm that had pent her thought too long within a narrow earth-bound cell. But as a thunder shower dispels the darkness that its own clouds have created, so now her storm-tossed thought was cleared, and presently she ceased her piteous moan and rested quietly.

Davie watched her all the time, but did not speak

to her, though once he rose, and gently pressed his head against her face. But he knew what trouble was himself, and also knew that he best could bear the worst alone. Should she want him, he was there, ready waiting upon her beck and call!

But the girl did not need her faithful friend, dear though he was at all times to her. She was now in a world above the comprehension of even Davie's loving heart.

Later she rose and deftly wound her plaid around her shoulders; and now scarcely a sign remained upon her face of the great battle which she had so nearly lost. As she stood upon the granite rock, her feet firmly planted upon its smooth surface, the grey mantle which a distant storm had spread half across the sky was suddenly disturbed, and the sun broke up the even shadows which the dark cloud had cast upon the moor.

Cecil Gwynne now stood outlined by light, for the sun fell full and strong behind her and filled the air around with penetrating brightness, while a fresh breeze caught her plaid and wrapped it closer to her form. Standing thus upright upon the rock, she threw her hands behind her and lightly rested the one upon the other, as she lifted her face towards the heavens above. Upon every side there stretched the silent moor, the brown at her feet undulating into the purple distance, which melted into closest union with the sky. And the blue form on high peeped into her eyes, and liking well what it found there, it rested long in their purity and peace, thus shadowing forth the mighty truth that, while yet on earth, man may reflect the glory of heaven.

Softly her voice now fell upon the sunlit air, impelled by the holy peace which governed her.

In all the world there is but one God. God, Spirit, boundless, limitless Substance—Mind. God, Life—the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, without beginning of years or end of days. God, Love—"KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS," even the Great "I AM."

Thus the storm was stilled, and the battle raged no more; and thus it will ever be when sense shall yield to Soul, and man, new-born, affirms that "Good is All-in-All."

CHAPTER XXIX

EGYPT

In hope to merit heaven by making earth a hell.
—*Byron.*

Mr. Saul sat in his study, his mind in a whirl, and an open letter in his hand. Could he do it? Yes! Must he do it? Why not someone else? But as he asked this last question his brow flushed with conscious pride. Why not someone else? Because the matter was considered to be one of great importance, and he was known to be the most eloquent preacher in England. Yet for once he wished that this were not so. Dearly as he loved his gift, sacred as he deemed it to be, for once he wished that it were not his; for he still loved Cecil Gwynne, and he knew that he would always love her. Certainly, he could refuse to preach upon this subject, but apart from the reluctance to give Cecil pain, he had no wish to refuse. He saw that the time had come when Christian Science could not longer be ignored: it must be grappled with, and by a master hand. It must be exposed, and at once, before it ensnared important members of the Church of England—men and women whose families had been for generations staunch upholders of the established Church of the land. A strong voice must be raised in protest, that he saw clearly enough; but

he would rather that Cecil should not know that voice for his, for it would add to her pain that he should publicly denounce that which she believed herself to love. Of course, she was deluded and must in time see her mistake. Of course, she did not really *love* Christian Science, but was merely infatuated by it for the time being. Nevertheless it appeared that many others, equally well-educated, equally intelligent, were likewise deluded; and it is the educated classes which yet rule England. This Mr. Saul realised. This dangerous heresy must therefore be immediately exposed. He would not willingly hurt one hair of Cecil's head; it was hateful to him to cause her one moment's pain, but he must do his duty, and he was made of the stuff to do it the more readily, the more zealously, in spite of the personal suffering which it entailed.

That afternoon he received a letter from Cecil Gwynne written from Invergach. He was at last convinced, for in it she told him decidedly that she could not marry him, while their views on the vital matter of religion differed so essentially, and in spite of himself he felt obliged to accept her word as final. He bitterly declared that Christian Science had robbed him of all that he considered worth the having. It did not occur to him that, if his religion were indeed all that a man's religion should be to him, the real substance of life must still be his. He was suffering too keenly to reason logically, and as he brooded upon what was, in reality, his own misconception of the matter, his trouble assumed undue proportions in his eyes, and life became for him a distorted thing, for he saw nothing clearly.

Now, a time of tempestuous energy set in for Robert

Saul, and he filled his days and nights with work. But through all his busiest hours, there ran a strong current of passionate pain, and daily his rancour against this religion, of which in reality he knew scarcely anything more than the name, grew into a resentment which filled his heart with hatred and, worse still, with revenge.

He knew his power and knew that many would follow without question wherever he should lead; so he decided to preach against Christian Science, and all the time he placed his motive for this mistaken crusade upon a pedestal which he himself had built. In reality, his life at this period was not inspired by any lofty aim, though self-deceived he did not realise how entirely it became coloured by his desire to hurt the thing which had caused him so much pain—to hit back at Christian Science! And all the time the only life his pain possessed was a false sense of life, with which he himself endowed it. The animal instinct, given rein, soon claimed him for its own, and yet Robert Saul had no idea that he was simply a puppet in the hands of elementary evil—a power at once secret, subtle and elaborate; whose arena is the world, whose tools are the hearts of men, women and *little children;*—whose power is the power of darkness, even "darkness which may be felt"; a power which fears but one force, whose name it knows, but whose nature it mistakes, deeming it close kindred to its own. Truly, Pharaoh still reigns in Egypt, and Rachel weeps once again for her little children!

Still the world sleeps on! Religious, political, social England sleeps on, while luxury and lethargy weave bright fancies about her head. Thus she dreams of

peace, in the midst of pain; she prates of freedom, while entwined in snarls; she carols of life, while speeding towards her death. Does no whisper reach the throne of England's King? Does no doubt steal slumber from him whose pomp is next to that of king? Does no question stir the heart of those who yet glean the freeholds that their fathers have gleaned from generation to generation? *Does no fear blanch the cheek of woman with babe upon her breast?* Does no tremor stir the heart of "them that are with child"?

Shall history indeed repeat itself, but in more awful guise? or will England awake, while yet there is time, and understand that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work" and that tyranny, of a kind and to a degree before unknown, threatens to rule by every fireside? So cautiously does the leaven work, so carefully does it don the robe of peace; so wisely does it bear an old and honoured name, that men and women smile, whilst they nurse upon the breast the hooded asp, whose poisoned fangs lull them ever to a deeper sleep, a sleep, the ultimate of which is—death!

CHAPTER XXX

MESMERIZED

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

—Psalms.

A FEW weeks later Mr. Saul informed his congregation that he intended to preach two sermons upon the subject of Christian Science, and that he wished them to make his intention known to their friends, as the first would be delivered on the following Sunday. Many, the majority perhaps, had heard of this new theme; some few felt that, if so strange a thing could yet be true, then God's love might become a tangible reality—a factor in their lives. But by far the greater number laughed the thing to scorn. Nevertheless many engagements were broken, and others postponed, in order that the day might be kept free; and during the week the subject assumed paramount importance at social gatherings in Mr. Saul's parish. It was odd how keen the interest in it became. Perhaps some hint of the Vicar's love story was in the air; but much more it was, that sick people hungered to be well, though, with the suicidal instinct of the carnal mind, they pushed from them the only thing that stood between them and the grave. Unknowing of what they did, they cried for freedom, while electing to be slaves.

So the whole parish went to hear what the Vicar had

to say of Christian Science; and upon that Sunday morning the church, always full, was filled to overflowing, while many could find no accommodation and so returned home disappointed, for there was not even standing room.

Mr. Saul's personal opinion carried so much weight that several who thought that they went with open minds, had already unconsciously decided to be guided by what their Vicar should say.

And what did the Vicar say?

His sermon had been carefully thought out night after night; no other sermon had ever taken him so long to write. Indeed it was his usual custom to preach *extempore*, but it had seemed to be out of the question to do so upon this occasion—his ideas appeared to stagnate and grow cold. But his intention to preach upon the subject of Christian Science had been advertised upon the housetops and must be executed up to time. It could not, for a moment, occur to such a man to abandon it.

Now the time had come for him to carry it out, and he mounted the pulpit steps with trepidation in his heart, a sensation entirely new to him. It was the crowded congregation! but he had preached before a King. It was that he deemed his duty somewhat hard, for he still loved Cecil Gwynne! but he had accepted it in obedience to his own desire. It was that the responsibility was one of most unusual weight! but he was not wont to weigh the burden upon his shoulders. Blind and headstrong he did not realise that he had assumed this task in part at the prompting of a devil, named Revenge! Now masquerading in the guise of duty, it urged him to give back pain for pain. Robert

Saul was far above that ignoble nature which will consciously strike one weaker than itself. He told himself that *because* Cecil Gwynne was so intimately connected with the matter, he suffered the more. It was not Cecil whom, even unconsciously, he wished to punish. He would willingly, nay preferably, have so arranged it, had such a thing been possible, that she should never know of the step which he felt called upon to take. It was Christian Science that had caused the great disquiet of his life, and it was Christian Science that he intended to destroy, before it did any more harm—before it deluded any more women such as the one whom he loved, or spoilt the lives of other men, as it had spoilt his own.

With a mind thus filled with unrest, it was not to be expected that he should retain his usual self-possession upon this eventful Sunday, and Mr. Saul became conscious, before he had given out his text, that he must look to it or he would lose his laurels. Usually, his delivery was the perfection of refined utterance, calm and sweet in tone; to-day, an odd excitement caught and governed him, and once he almost ranted in what he deemed to be his righteous wrath.

Malcolm sat below the pulpit steps and trembled; why, he could not have told; and when Mr. Saul observed the child's pale face, anger rose anew within him, because Cecil was not there to tend the little fellow as a mother might have done.

At first, the congregation listened as one man, but as their Vicar's sermon passed from mere statement on to what he intended as clever argument, Mr. Saul, whose sense to-day was hypersensitive, became aware that surprise, even disappointment, showed plainly

upon the face of more than one valued member of his flock. Especially he noted one sitting there, his figure bent with age and his hair all silvered by his years of toil, and he knew him for a man whose face had grown most beautiful in the service of his Lord. His dress bespoke episcopalian rank, and the quiet dignity of his presence was silent witness to the consecration of his life. As Mr. Saul continued to preach, the sweet face grew clouded as with pain, and sorrow bowed the old man's head.

Doggedly determined to go through with that which he had come to do, Robert Saul turned each page of his carefully written discourse and continued to deliver it with unusual emphasis. But as he left the pulpit, he understood perfectly that he had been defeated, and again by the very thing that he had come to kill; and he was filled with bitterness. His arguments, if such they could be called, he suddenly saw to have been weak and most illogical. But it only angered him the more and filled his heart with deeper rage against the power that stood invulnerable to all attack.

Now, the service was over and the Vicar stood alone in the vestry. Sick at heart and strangely tired, he laid his surplice aside, pausing, as he did so, to register a mental vow that his second sermon upon this subject should outshine the first, as the sunlit heavens outshine the starlit sky. He had been feeling ill for some time; no doubt that accounted for to-day's failure and for this unusual lassitude. He would preach that other sermon, but first he would do some climbing in the Alps and return to town his usual self, and better. He and Malcolm would spend a quiet month in Switzerland.

The child seemed ill, and yet the doctors could find nothing wrong; the bracing air would doubtless put him right and wake him into merry boyhood once again.

As Mr. Saul decided this, he paused by the open window, and the voice of a passer-by reached him. He recognised it as that of a favourite parishioner.

"I am sorry that you should have heard our Vicar for the first time to-day; usually, he is clear and conclusive, but to-day——"

"To-day," an unfamiliar voice interrupted, "he seemed to have no case at all; I must search this matter to the core, for it seems to me to have more in it than I thought."

So that was all that he had done! Sent people to investigate the thing he hated most in all the world!

Deeply depressed he turned to shut the vestry door and, as he did so, faced an old man standing upon the steps, a man from whom he had received much and to whom he must therefore extend a cordial welcome, though he longed to be alone; longed for the isolation of his study, in which to find again the imperturbable man of the moment, the master of every circumstance, who, he had believed until this morning, bore the name of Robert Saul!

"Robert,"—the old man paused—"to your thirty years I can add another forty in which I have learnt to love mankind, but not enough! It is because I have watched your strenuous life, and watching, have learnt to love *you*, that I speak now and tell you that you have to-day made the mistake of your life!"

Robert Saul was silent. Many words lay ready behind his set lips, and he had much ado to leave them all

unspoken, but the very gentleness of the man before him forebade all interruption.

"Abuse, Saul, is no argument," the elder man continued, "I know something of these people, and this is a little of what I know. One day I held a child upon my arm—a babe—and I knew, or thought I knew, that even while I marked the cross upon his brow, that babe would die. The child's father stood before me, and I knew, or thought I knew, that death claimed him as well. But a stronger than death withdrew both child and man from the very jaws of death and, in the withdrawing, would seem to have so uplifted them, that the mind of each has risen higher year by year. That power which triumphed over death was Christian Science. I have watched the lives of many who follow its teaching, and I see that they are doing that *which we have left undone.* I see that their eyes are open, where ours are still shut. While you preached to-day, these words of the Master rang in my ears; 'And these signs shall follow *them that believe;* In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; *they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*' Why has the Church throughout the ages, dissected the Lord's command? Why have we not followed the Christ more wholly? Three years he ministered upon this earth, saving the sinner, *healing the sick,* and raising the dead. Why do not we do likewise? Why do not *we* lay hands upon the sick? *Would they recover were we to do so?* It seems to me," and now the gentle voice was sad and very low, "that I must, after fifty years and more, ask myself, do I really *believe?* If so, why

do I not 'heal the sick' and 'raise the dead'? In fact why do not the promised 'signs' follow *us?* Those promised signs do follow these people; the time to question that has passed. Can it be that their trust in God exceeds our own? Can it be that I, and others in the Church, have carried the wrong cross all along? *Can it be that we are fighting only half a fight?* I am actually tempted,"—and for a moment a youthful fire lit up the old man's eye—"I am actually tempted," he repeated, as he turned and faced the man who stood before him in the obvious prime of life, "to wish that I were you; to wish that I were young and strong and well equipped, as you are; then I would start afresh and fight a *new* crusade. I would war, not only against sin, but against disease as well. Now, it is too late! Too late for me, but not too late for you! for you have still the better part of your life before you! Pray God that you may help, not hinder, this gracious work. Robert," and now the sweet voice pleaded, and the gentle eyes grew more steadfast in their hope, "at any rate let us ask a blessing upon all who, no matter what their creed, try to serve the Christ. And let us note their gentle tolerance. They do not abuse the Church; on the contrary, they love all there is of good, wherever it be found; neither do they attempt to proselytise; but wait until the hungry, unfed by us, go to them for food."

The Vicar grew hot with wrath, but he was dumb. He looked at the pure face before him; he knew that he talked with a man who had recently drunk the cup of human sorrow to the dregs, and he could not say the words he would; for love and meekness were in every word that the old man uttered, and, as Robert

Saul looked again, he saw the sad lines deepen round the sensitive mouth; he saw the soft shade of unshed tears dim the eyes that nevertheless held an holy light within their depths. Ashamed, he put forth his hand in silence and took the other's thin fingers with his strong man's clasp. And as he towered above the stooping figure and thought upon the exceeding purity of the life which this man had lived, he held back the words of protest which rose to his lips and bade his friend of half a lifetime a courteous farewell.

. . . . .

A venerable man lay dying. Those who loved him best stood around his bed. Suddenly he rose upon his pillows, and stretching forth both hands he threw a supplicating cry upon the air; "Work, my God! give me more work to do for Thee!"

None there might hear the answer from on high, but every head bowed low, as in the presence of some holy thing.

Then one stooped and took the feeble form upon his arm, while he rested the pure, wrapt face against his heart. Bending low he caught the message, which trembled through the dying lips and did its work for God, in the manner, and at the time, of God's appointing. Hearing the whispered words the young man's strong face quivered, and his very lips grew pale. Rebellious, he raised his head and threw it high: and now, no longer was there any need to strain the ear, for the sick man's voice rose sweet and clear; "'Preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.'"

Then a great calm fell upon the beautiful face, and

a light of holy joy shone from the quiet eyes, ere the soft shadow of a gentle sleep o'ershadowed them. A woman's sob smote upon the silent air, as a man's voice, strange to Robert Saul, and yet his own, though surely impelled by a power not his own, slowly pronounced the solemn benediction;

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

CHAPTER XXXI

CLOUDS OF SENSE

He is a fool who thinks by force or skill
To turn the current of a woman's will.

—*Tuke.*

Mr. Saul and his little nephew were back in London. Their sojourn in Switzerland had been a conspicuous failure. The high altitude had not suited Malcolm, and their holiday had been curtailed, for it now appeared that the child's heart was seriously affected. Mr. Saul himself had not been well of late. While in Switzerland he had, for the first time in his life, tired easily when walking. Real climbing, at which he was a well-known expert, had this time proved to be out of the question. But at first he would not accept defeat, for it angered the usually strong man to fail, and it was not until repeated attempts to scale stiff mountain tracks invariably resulted in exhaustion the next day that he would admit himself beaten for a time; next year he would return and would then certainly succeed in mastering the passes which now mastered him. Immediately after his arrival in London he took Malcolm to the great child-specialist.

Dr. Arthur was comforting; he spoke soothingly and was emphatic in his declaration that no organic disease could have yet obtained any hold upon the boy's system.

Mr. Saul was not satisfied, however, for his thought suddenly flew back nearly thirty years, and with a shock he remembered that his own mother—Malcolm's grandmother—had died suddenly. He himself could not have been more than a toddling child at the time, but he had then received a mental impression which had never been erased; darkened rooms, low voices, weeping servants and a long procession of carriages! He now remembered how, with boyish glee, he had shouted when he saw the black plumes as they waved above the hearse and clapped his hands as the horses moved forward. His nurse had scolded him, telling him that his mother was dead and that he ought to be breaking his heart about it. Later his father had taken him to the churchyard and, showing him a new grave, had there told him that his mother had died quite suddenly "of heart failure." This of course conveyed very little to a child of four years old, but the dreary conviction was now borne in upon him that plainly "weak heart" was hereditary in his family, and that Malcolm bore the taint in his young system.

With horrible reiteration a certain portion of the second commandment rang in his ears—"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." What matter whether materia medica gave to the burden the name of "heredity" or "predisposition"? What matter whether it were nerves, hysteria or organic disease, which killed men, women and children? Of what importance could the medical designation of the illness be compared to the fact of an untimely death? And how many of those 700,000 deaths and over, which he knew occurred yearly in the United Kingdom, were untimely, even in the

eyes of a callous world? The fate which pursued man born of delicate parentage was relentless, hopeless. What hope then was there for little Malcolm—a child whose mother and grandmother, aye, and others before that for aught he knew, had died from the same disease?

What hope? Does the priest of God know so little of the word of God? What hope? Why this—the way of escape, the way to Life lies wide open to the world. Why does the man of God dissect the word of God? Why does the world turn its back upon the only door through which man can pass up to Life? "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation *of them that hate me;* and showing mercy unto thousands *of them that love me, and keep my commandments!*" What hope? Why this—he who *fulfilled* the law, he who epitomised the ten commandments in that one sublime word—*love,*—*he,* the practical Way-shower, further demonstrated that Love is Life, and *that obedience to the law of Love results in everlasting life.*

But habit and common custom are stronger than a man in deep distress. They proved strong enough at any rate to obliterate from Robert Saul's conscious thought the glorious promise with which Love and Justice had crowned the law of Life upon the Mount of Sinai. So he took Malcolm to another great specialist, a "heart" man this time, never pausing to consider that a fountain can rise no higher than its source, and that the cleverest brain on earth can rise no higher than the matter-womb from whence it comes. The great doctor was also a most kindly man, and, after the white-faced child and the stern-faced man

had left his consulting room, he asked himself many times and with despair in his weary eyes; "What more can I do? Is there nothing more known to science—no real aid for such as these to be found in the accumulated discoveries of the centuries?"

From this time there began for Malcolm a period of hopeless invalidism which finally made him long to die. He had no words, of course, in which to formulate his captive's cry, but his young wings beat wearily against the cage that the law of man daily built about him. What better than imprisonment was this death in life which now was his? Ruled by drugs and diet, his days became one monotonous monochrome.

Mr. Saul, who would have cut off his right hand to save the child, in the ignorance of his helpless love barred and bolted the prison gates. Nay, he even drove the boy deeper into the dungeon of despair, until his young heart pined and panted in an ever-narrowing cell.

Summer passed and autumn found Malcolm Stuart no better, but the specialist still spoke cheerfully and ordered him to Cannes.

Mr. Saul never hesitated. If his nephew must winter in the south of France, why so would he. His own prospects weighed not one jot with him, when Malcolm pressed down the scale upon the other side.

So together they went to Cannes; and on his good days, the boy would seem to be his old bright self and would delight his uncle, who scarcely left his side, by talking in the clever strain which had first drawn the reserved man to the little child. But these good days were few and far between, and April found the boy no better, though no worse; except that his nerves were

decidedly weaker. Now it was that his guardian's love was severely tested, for Malcolm became quite unlike himself, easily irritated, jealous if Uncle Robert stayed longer from his side than usual, exacting and scarcely grateful for the deep devotion which the lonely man lavished upon him. Being so much with the child by day meant for his uncle hours of hard work at night, for Mr. Saul was the last man to neglect his parish for any private call upon his time, and letters—whole sheaves of them—arrived daily from England and had often to be answered by return of mail.

So the two came back to London, and every day the iron entered more deeply into the soul of Robert Saul; for struggle as he did with all his might, he still was beaten at every turn. Allopathy, homœopathy, hygiene, all were weighed and all were found wanting.

Then one cold spring day things seemed to reach a climax. The evening papers contained grave news for widow and orphan and for many another besides. The large Indian bankers had failed, in whose hands Mr. Saul had left the whole of Malcolm's fortune!

Life for the last year had been for him so filled with the battle against death, that he had neither found time nor energy to invest the money. In one way it did not matter, he reflected, for he would of course make it up to Malcolm and that without delay. The sum needed to do this was large, and its withdrawal from his own capital would severely cripple him, but there was no question in his mind, for he held himself responsible for every penny of the fortune which was now lost to his nephew. True, the child knew nothing of the legacy, and his mother being dead, Mr. Saul remained the sole trustee, but at once he sent instruc-

tions to his lawyers to set the matter right for Malcolm Stuart. But, even as he sealed the letter, he gravely asked himself whether the boy would ever reap the fruits of what amounted to a very considerable sacrifice upon his part. To economise was unnatural to Robert Saul, though he was too shrewd a man to be tempted to foolish extravagance.

It was May now, and to-morrow, Mr. Saul suddenly decided, he would take Malcolm to the country on to the moors, for there the boy would renew his strength. Alone in his study, he declared aloud that Malcolm should not die! His passionate exclamation was full of the pain which constantly gnawed at his heart, but which he seldom dared to face. The London doctors were mistaken! He would take the boy to the good old village doctor who had saved his own life more than twenty years ago. Dr. Reynolds had fathered the village children for nearly a generation; surely *he* understood children and would tell what ailed the boy and quickly set him up again; by some simple remedy perhaps, some common-sense prescription, too simple to be catalogued officially.

That night Mr. Saul sat long by the child's side, remaining indeed, until the heavy eyes closed in a drugged slumber—it had come to that, for the boy constantly lay awake restless and excited, until a sedative was administered. Now, even after he slept, Robert Saul continued to sing, in his sweet rich tenor, the soft lullaby which Malcolm loved the best. At last, assured that the sleep was deep, though seemingly not as restful as it should have been, he stole from the room and crept his way downstairs, careful not to risk awakening the tired child.

His dinner had been waiting and was spoilt. His nerves were overstrung, and he was irritated by the circumstance of the unappetising meal. This caused him to act stupidly, as an angry man sometimes does act, by going dinnerless. Hastily swallowing a glass of claret he left the dining-room and suddenly faced a woman standing in the hall.

The woman approached him and spoke in hurried, nervous accents, requesting that she might see him alone. She wore a plain dark dress, and her colourless face and pale grey eyes seemed familiar to Robert Saul, though his tired brain could not recall the when, or the where, of their previous meeting. He entered his study mechanically and the woman followed him.

The butler, concluding that she was a parishioner who had come upon business, closed the door after her, and Mr. Saul turned to find his visitor regarding him intently.

"I have hurried home from Cannes," she said, "for I heard a few days after I arrived there of your nephew's illness. The news brought to my mind a little circumstance which I had quite forgotten:" for a moment she hesitated and moved her shifty glance, then she continued rapidly. "Your sister, Mrs. Stuart, made me witness this just before she died. I forgot it altogether until the other day."

Mr. Saul glanced at the woman swiftly when she spoke of his sister, and now he instantly recognised her as the nurse who had been hurriedly summoned from an adjacent nursing home, when Winnie had been taken ill. He had no idea what could be the contents of the envelope, which she was holding out to him, but he saw that it was carefully and fully addressed to him in

Winnie's handwriting. As he opened it, he was distinctly conscious of a feeling of antipathy towards the woman who stood before him. He was certain that she had lied to him and that, for some purpose of her own, she had retained the letter for over a year.

With a curious unwillingness he took the half-sheet of paper from its cover, slowly turning towards the light and feeling all the time consciously restive beneath the woman's veiled, but penetrating glance.

The letter was very short, but it, like the address upon the envelope, was written by his sister's hand. He seemed to read from the top to the bottom of the page in one single glance; indeed it almost seemed to him that the words leapt up to meet him. His face grew more stern, and the woman, her eyes still watchful beneath their half-closed lids, noted his mental disturbance, and she was pleased. "Good," she thought, "I did right to wait. Now he will pay me well!"

Mr. Saul unlocked the rigid hand which he held behind his back and quietly opened the door.

"Thank you," he said curtly. "Good-evening," and he raised his hand towards the bell——

The woman's face fell, but only for an instant, she had not played her trump card yet; she had not wished to play it to-night, but "needs must," she decided cynically, "when the devil drives." Mr. Saul did not press the electric button over which his finger rested, for he saw that the woman had not stirred and that she had more to say. "Either," she argued, "he intends to give the boy up—but that I do not believe—or he intends to burn that letter; I fancy that the latter is his game!"

"If you will shut the door,"—her voice now held

a threatening note—"I will tell you something further about this matter."

But she had made a false move, and she understood instantly that she had done so, for Mr. Saul's eyes flashed angrily and he immediately rang the bell. As his man entered the room, he left it, saying quietly, "Open the front door, Ford." But he too had made a mistake, though he did not know it then; for the woman, who had so far been actuated merely by a love of gain, was now enraged at her summary dismissal in the presence of a servant. In a mind both mean and cruel, a sense of injury soon bred a vindictive thought which one day she would barb and point at the man's heart.

CHAPTER XXXII

CONFUSION

> For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.
>
> —*Hosea.*

That night Robert Saul did not sleep at all. Instead, indulging the habit into which he had fallen since his sister's death, he left his study at midnight and stole softly up to Malcolm's room. The child slept, though he muttered as he dreamed, but his uncle could distinguish nothing that he said. Once he thought he heard him call for his mother, and bending over the boy he kissed him many times, passionately, but very gently. Finally, he knelt beside the bed and prayed that, if it was His will, God would remove this last most bitter cup from his lips. He knelt there, and most earnestly he prayed, but when he arose from his knees, he did so quite unrefreshed. As he turned to leave the room, Malcolm suddenly rose in his bed and beat the air with his thin white hands, crying out with a sudden, startled scream. Robert gently lifted the boy to his breast and murmured endearing words over him, but the child struggled and still cried aloud. Taking him in both arms, Mr. Saul walked up and down the long bedroom, the room which had been Winnie's and was now the child's, because it caught the morning sun.

Soon Malcolm slept again, and Robert laid him in his bed, staying by his side, until he was sure that he was really resting quietly. Then he went downstairs and left the house upon one of the long midnight rambles in which he often sought to work off the unrest of the day.

When he turned homeward, it was early morning, and he was mentally and physically very tired. His mind recurred constantly to the nurse's visit, and he was pursued by an army of most subtle temptations. Should he burn the paper that the woman had given him, who would know? No one, except the woman who had brought it to him, and money would silence *her;* besides, she could prove nothing! Was such a document legal? He doubted it; and here a way of escape seemed suddenly to open before him. He had only occasionally seen Winnie conscious after she had fallen at his feet that day, and he had watched in her sick room almost continuously until she died. This paper must certainly have been written while delirium held its sway. The doctors would support this view. But even as he argued thus, Robert Saul knew that this was the wide road that leads to destruction; for in his heart, he believed that Winnie had been perfectly sane when she penned those few clear lines to him. Her letter was dated two days before her death, before the fever had overruled her mind. He knew that one honest course alone lay before him, but it was the road that certainly led at any rate to a temporary separation between himself and Malcolm, and he could not take it. *He would not give up the child even for a time*, least of all to those strangers whom he utterly distrusted. He himself was the boy's natural guardian in sickness as

in health and he would not relinquish that which he determinedly designated as his God-given trust. Winnie must have been mad, or she would never have written that letter; it was preposterous to suppose that perfect strangers—for these "Meades" were nothing more—would care for her child, when ill, out of pure love! And Winnie, at the time she wrote that letter, was absolutely unable to make any provision for the boy. It was an irrational letter, Robert Saul declared, showing a blind infatuation for a man and woman of whom she had known practically nothing. He himself knew enough of their principles—if such they could be called—to justify him in keeping his nephew out of their hands. He believed Christian Science to be the work of the devil—one of the most dangerous heresies indeed, that had ever enticed men and women away from the Catholic Church. For years Mr. Saul had fought vehemently and, for him, with wonderful patience against the ever-growing power of the nonconformist; and the bare possibility that his dearly-loved nephew, one of his own kith and kin and the being upon whom he now lavished all his love, might grow up a dissenter, was gall and wormwood to his orthodox mind. Should he hand the child over to these "Meades," even for a time, they would of course educate him in all the ignorant superstition of their cult. As Robert Saul pictured the boy's future, influenced by such tuition, his imagination painted a manhood utterly at variance with every firmly rooted prejudice, every hereditary dogma which ruled his own life. He believed absolutely that his nephew's ultimate salvation depended upon his enrolment among the members of the Church. He would prefer that Malcolm should be confirmed in that branch

of the Catholic Church—the Church of England—to which he himself belonged, but should the boy, as he grew older, elect to become a member of the other branch—the Church of Rome—he should not oppose his choice. The slight differences which are to be found between the opinions of the Anglican Churchman of the present day and the declared adherent of the Church of Rome *he* regarded as unimportant. He had sometimes taken Malcolm to a Roman Catholic Church when travelling abroad. The child had appeared to enjoy both early mass and evensong, more than he did any service in London. A career of honour and great usefulness plainly lay before the boy. Splendidly endowed with brains, he only needed a wise guiding hand to direct his education in order that he might be fitted for almost any position.

Thus weaving the webs of a fanciful future for Malcolm, Mr. Saul forgot, at times, the child's precarious state of health, and he received, for the second time in a few hours, a severe shock when he returned from his long walk, for upon opening his door he saw Malcolm standing upon the stairs. The hall was only dimly lighted, but what little light there was fell full upon the small white figure, and Robert Saul was startled at the death-like pallor of the face.

"Malcolm!" he exclaimed, and hurried forward, but it was not until he reached the child's side that he understood what was happening. Then he was dismayed and, for the moment, helpless. The child was walking in his sleep. Robert Saul had never before watched a somnambulist, and he was horrified at the boy's appearance, for his face worked with the excitement which controlled him and which had evidently brought him

from his bed. Now Malcolm began to talk, and his uncle heard every word that he said, for the boy enunciated each syllable with a curious distinctness. He was talking quite coherently about the last mathematical problem which he had worked out a few days previously. He reached the bottom of the stairs, while Mr. Saul, fascinated into inaction, watched him as he pressed his finger upon the knob and turned the electric light full on. Opening the study door the child went straight to his own little writing able, and sat down in the revolving chair which his uncle had given him a few months previously. Robert Saul followed him, and, vaguely aware of a warning received sometime, somewhere, to the effect that a somnambulist must never be hastily awakened, he was careful to make no noise as he watched the boy, who now lifted a pen and dipped it in the ink. Doubtless the child intended to work out some problem which had evidently got upon his mind; but he always worked in pencil, and his uncle wondered why he now so carefully chose pen and notepaper. The next minute Robert Saul's own face whitened and suddenly looked old. The light from the hall fell clear across the writing-table, and he easily deciphered each word as the boy wrote it. Malcolm was writing a letter to his dead mother! Worn out by the stress of the last few hours and tired by his long walk, Mr. Saul sank into a chair beside the child and covered his face with his hands. How long he remained there he did not know, but he was presently roused by a sudden complete silence which seemed to possess the room. He dropped his hands and rose involuntarily to his feet, in time to see Malcolm sitting

with a troubled face before the letter, which he had placed in an envelope. The child still held the pen in his right hand, but now he held it perfectly still. "The address," he muttered, "I forget the address." Then the expression of his face changed, and Mr. Saul, terrified lest the boy should awaken to a sudden realisation of the truth, started forward to lead him back to bed. "Mother," the boy muttered, and put the letter in his uncle's hand.

Until that night Mr. Saul had never once heard Malcolm speak of his mother since her death, and it was a shock to the man who contemplated taking a course contrary to her wishes, to hear her child asking for her now. Very gently he lifted the boy in his arms —how light the burden was! Though so small for his age, he weighed much too little, surely! Robert had carried the child about his bedroom only a few hours ago, but now his perception was doubtless intensified by anxiety. He spoke softly to the boy, and once more crooned the favourite lullaby, while Malcolm, still asleep, wound his arms about his uncle's neck and nestled against him with a little sigh.

Robert did not take the boy to his room, but laid him instead upon his own bed, and watched the rest of the night in a chair beside him. And as he watched he suffered, as only a proud and sensitive nature can suffer, under self-inflicted wrong. For his mind was quite made up. To-morrow, he would find that woman and pay her anything she asked, rather than part for a single day with Malcolm, who was all that he now had to love and who loved him as no one else ever had done. He felt again the touch of the boy's thin arm around

his neck and the pressure of the child's head upon his breast, and he swore passionately that nothing should part them—neither life nor death.

The morning's post brought him that which pushed him one step further upon the wide road, one step lower in his own esteem. The woman wrote to him, enclosing her address and a promise to hand over to him the original of Mrs. Stuart's letter (which original she now confessed that she had withheld) for one hundred pounds!

Robert Saul almost laughed. The sum was too absurd, when compared with Malcolm's love.

That afternoon the woman called again. Mr. Saul awaited her in his study, and there received from her Winnie's letter; but before locking it safely away in the old bureau in which he kept his most private correspondence, he compared it with the forged copy which she had left with him the day before, and he admitted to himself that the copy was indeed a cleverly executed duplicate.

The woman greedily fingered the crisp bank notes which Mr. Saul now gave her, and as she left the house, she laughed. "Poor fool! to order me off yesterday like that, and in the presence of his servant, too! Poor fool!" And she laughed again, for she was of the nature to bear a grudge until the measure was repaid, —"full measure, pressed down, . . . and running over." Her "pound of flesh" she must and would have. "Poor fool! he will regret his lordly airs one day! Does he think me no wiser than himself?"

Robert Saul sat long in his study that evening and thought upon the two letters which had so disturbed the current of his life during the last twenty-four

hours—one *from* Winnie, and one *to* Winnie! He had been startled when he saw Malcolm commence that letter to his dead mother, and so far he had not dared to read it. But now he drew it from his pocket and read it slowly through. As he did so, his strong right hand trembled, and his brow flushed. Was this thing true? Had he indeed failed in the one direction in which he most desired to succeed? It would seem so, for Malcolm's letter to his dead mother was just a simple child-like cry for happiness. Incoherent in parts, it yet maintained its purposeful wail throughout, and in it the child reiterated his desire to come to her, to stay beside her, above all, to be happy and well again!

Robert Saul groaned as he pressed his head back against the leather of his chair. So he had stained his hands for this! The boy did not love him after all, but had merely acquired a habit of leaning upon him, as the weak will lean upon the strong. Pshaw! the boy had been asleep and knew nothing of what he wrote; overwrought, he had but obeyed the dictates of an excited brain.

And so the unhappy man threw the ball to and fro and found but sorry comfort in the game.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE MAN-MADE HELL OF MAN

Long is the way
And hard, that out of hell leads up to light.
—*Milton.*

Mr. Saul and his little ward were now upon the banks of the Dart. Both were happier than they had been for a long time. The village doctor or the pure sweet air, or both perhaps, had seemed to do wonders for Malcolm. Their departure from London had been delayed a little, for at last Robert Saul was a bishop, the youngest bishop yet created.

True, he knew, what only a few others would ever know, that he had been obliged to descend in his own estimation before this promotion had been offered to him, though for a long time he had steadily refused to work the matter by interest. He would, he had declared, stand upon his own merits alone and not seek aid from the good will of any private friend. But in the end he had written to a "useful man," and now the appointment was a *fait accompli.*

He had since been revelling in a quiet week with only Malcolm for his companion. To-day, however, he must leave the child with the cheerful, clever nurse who had accompanied them to Devonshire, and Malcolm was actually content that his uncle should go from

him, the purpose being to inspect more minutely their new home.

As he travelled through the beautiful English country, Robert Saul felt almost glad again. Malcolm had kissed him lovingly good-bye, and gripped his hand so hard, that he had been forced gently to open the little fingers before they would release him. It was only now that he was *de facto* a bishop, that he realised how much he had desired this place and power. To rule was natural and sweet to him, and now his kingdom would be large. He was charmed with all he saw at Exminster, and wrote that night to his lawyers instructing them to dispose of his London house.

The climate at Exminster, being the driest and sunniest in England, was the very thing for Malcolm, and the Palace was delightfully situated upon a hill. Robert Saul quickly selected a beautiful bedroom for the boy—a bright room looking out upon a sweet old-world garden, full of half-forgotten flowers.

Then he hurried back to Devonshire, eager to pour into Malcolm's ears an account of their new home. In the train he read some of the many kind and eulogistic things which appeared at that time in the daily papers about the new Bishop of Exminster, and a not unnatural pride flushed his brow, for he knew that the praise was deserved and had been earned by strenuous toil.

A rather tedious wait at a junction was followed by a short, though tiresome, journey upon a branch line. Then came a five-mile walk, for apparently his wire, ordering the dogcart, had not reached in time; at any rate the cart was not there.

It only mattered in so far as it delayed his return to

Malcolm, but after all he would soon be with the child; and as Robert Saul strode across the moors, he joyously pictured the boy's delight when he should hear all that he had to tell him. The day was lovely, and he was a little disappointed at not seeing Malcolm sitting in his low chair by the river waiting for him. It was after tea time, but he would be sure to have delayed the meal until his uncle's return, so that they might sit down together; he would find him at the cottage door.

At the garden gate the nurse met him; her usually bright face was grave, and dark rings about her eyes bespoke recent tears.

"I could not send the cart for you," she said, "I had to send it for the doctor: he is with Malcolm now."

Mr. Saul did not ask a single question. He was too shocked to think connectedly. Almost in a stride he reached Malcolm's room and stood dejectedly beside the bed.

The doctor held up a warning hand. "I have just got him to sleep," he whispered, "the pain has been awful."

The doctor explained that the spasms of pain had lasted longer than usual, and that this was dangerous in Malcolm's weak state. "I was afraid of this," he added, "the heart——"

"Oh, stop," Mr. Saul exclaimed, "and tell me the truth at once, will he live?"

"Yes," was the slow answer, "if we can keep his strength up. Keep him in the open air, and don't let him get excited. I would not cross his will at all, better spoil him a little rather than have any excitement."

And thus the kindly old man took his leave, but as he turned the corner and left the cottage out of sight, he shook his head gravely and sighed a little, for he knew that the child was passing beyond all human aid.

Now a time of test and trial such as he had never yet known, set in for Robert Saul: Malcolm grew weaker every day, refusing to rest except in his uncle's arms. He had taken on a sick child's whim and would never remain for a moment in the house. Wonderful weather made it possible for him to be out all day long and, when the sun went down and the evening breeze blew chill, his uncle would wrap the boy in a shawl and tramp the moors for miles with him in his arms, carrying his light burden tenderly, as a woman carries that which she loves and fears to lose.

Often the man himself was very weary, for his strength seemed now to be far less than heretofore, but Malcolm, self-engrossed, never noticed this, and was often impatient if "Uncle Robert" rested too long upon the rough stone walls or kindly hillocks which dotted the moors.

And yet in his somewhat selfish way he loved the deeply loving man who tended him day and night. Indeed, a world with no "Uncle Robert" in it would have seemed impossible to Malcolm at this period of his life. He never troubled, however, to contemplate anything beyond his near vision, for he was very tired always and wanted only to sleep day and night. But even when he slept, he seemed to know if Robert left him for a time, and would instantly grow restless, sometimes crying out as though afraid. When awake he clung to his uncle with a pathos resulting partly from

his helpless state, partly from his lonely little life, and under all there lay a deep conviction that in all the world there was no one else so clever or so strong as "Uncle Robert."

So it came about that Bishop Saul, who could no longer be absent from his new diocese, planned to take Malcolm home to Exminster; but every day the doctor pleaded for delay in order that the child might first gain strength for the journey; and Malcolm himself seemed to cling to the murmuring river, and the wide beauty of the moor, and begged continually for "just another day." At last the time came when Robert's poor blind eyes were opened and he read aright the doctor's meaning glance. He himself had not slept properly for months and was physically quite unfit to bear the continuous strain of his little nephew's illness. For days and nights, indeed, he had not gone to bed at all, and now it began to tell, even upon his splendid constitution.

Desperately he had fought for this loved life; desperately he had prayed that this one little heart might be left to love him, and now—the doctor would not let him even hope!

That evening Bishop Saul walked further than usual with the child and returned to find the nurse, whose kind heart was growing anxious, watching at the gate. She lifted her arms to take the boy, but Robert Saul motioned her peremptorily aside, and strode into the cottage with his burden. She noticed that he staggered as he walked, and that night she told the doctor of strange, incoherent mutterings which, grumbling through the thin cottage walls, reached her from the Bishop's room.

"Can't you give him something to quiet his nerves?" she asked. "He is worn out with the mental strain, and he tries his physical strength too far in taking these unheard of walks."

"Medicine will not help him," the old doctor answered; "but—it will soon be over now, and then his new work will engross him. I know the Bishop well, he must live hard; it is the nature of some men."

That night Robert Saul, contrary to his custom, left Malcolm's side directly the child slept. He could not, he *would not*, stay and see him die. He called the nurse and waited until he was sure that she had, close to hand, all that she needed for the child's comfort, and then he immediately left the house.

The night was perfectly still and nearly dark, but Bishop Saul knew almost every foot of the rough roads that intersected the moors in every direction. He walked mile after mile, never pausing until he reached the valley to which he had carried Malcolm that day. There he rested, but not for long; his misery moved him to restless action.

Hurrying through bracken and wild wortleberries, his foot was suddenly arrested, so that he almost fell. Through the semi-darkness he discerned a huge monolith not two paces from him. Now the mystery of the moor possessed Robert Saul, and for a moment withdrew his thought from the present, flinging it back upon the shrouded past. How, he asked himself, had prehistoric man moved the roughly hewn stone of vast girth upon which he now stood?—primitive man, without mechanical aid? Had not each rocky slab a story to tell of patience and strength unequalled by the men of his own day, whose hurried lives left no opportunity

for the full development of that calm and quiet dominion over self and circumstance, with which man must be endowed, if he would do enduring good and add a golden page to the history of the world?

Once more he walked for hours, and when again he stopped he found that his unconscious thought had directed his steps back to the head of the vale. It looked gloomy in the light of the pale new moon which was about to set and which was so beclouded that no detail of the landscape was discernible. Yes, just one thing the Bishop could see distinctly, but perhaps that was because he had so often remarked it before. There upon the hillside, near the bottom of the valley, was a single tree; motionless it stood in the airless summer night, dark and lonely always in its perfect isolation—a thing apart, a looker-on at the friendly life of the valley. Pairing birds flew over its head in springtime, not pausing to rest upon its branches, not caring to carol from its top. All summer busy-winged insects buzzed merrily among the heather near its base, eating of the flowers' sweetness, but the tree had seemingly no part in life, and stood there dreary and alone, always alone, as *he* would be upon the morrow!

Robert Saul thought that the tree was like himself, a thing to be pitied, yet quite beyond the help of man. But nothing really held place in his mind that night, except the gnawing pain at his heart. All day long he had been fiercely rebellious; he had fought this fight for Malcolm so hard, and for so long, and yet he had lost. Now, hour after hour, he sought to resign his will to that of the Deity whom he worshipped and who, he was accustomed to declare, could order nothing wrongly. But he completely failed. He could not

resign himself; he could not meekly contemplate the blank which Malcolm's death would make in his life. He was ashamed that it was so, for often he had preached the gospel of resignation, and always he had supposed that he himself would, if called upon to do so, be able to practise that which he so perpetually preached. But the hour was upon him and it found him breaking his heart over the anticipated death of a little child.

Utterly exhausted, he at last threw himself full length upon the heather and pillowed his head upon his folded arms. Now he saw, or thought he saw, in the darkness of the valley below, Malcolm's face, and he seemed to hear, in the silence of the night about him, Malcolm's voice; almost he felt the touch of Malcolm's arms around his neck. . . . Now it was Winnie's face that he saw and Winnie's voice that he heard. And was not that Winnie's form that floated across the valley and was lost when it reached the lonely tree? . . . He buried his face in his hands and longed for the relief of a woman's tears. But no comfort came; instead, a weary question beat within his brain; "Is there no help, is there nothing that can be done?" Presently the hopeless question left his tired brain, and from his heart a silent cry arose.

"My God! my God! tell me what to do, and I will do it. 'Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth'!"

At last he arose and seated himself upon a fallen tree, and presently he slept—slept just as he sat, with his face held within his hands; his elbows upon his knees; his great figure heaped together.

But before he slept, he, overwrought, asked again and again another question. "Death! and what be-

yond?" How the thought of Winnie haunted him—Winnie, white and still, standing with her arms outstretched across the dark oak of the door; thus forming a human cross; then Winnie, fallen at his feet, moaning in her speechless pain.

Dully, stupidly his dazed thought sought an answer to his question, but nothing definite could formulate in a mind darkened with the fear of death. His last conscious thought, however, was an unconscious prayer for light, and before he slept his heart overflowed with a silent longing which became the prayer of *true desire.*

Very early that morning Doctor Reynolds drove across the moor. He, too, had spent the night in fighting death; and he had lost the battle. It was scarcely an hour ago that he had gently laid a tiny lifeless form upon a pillow, and left it there amid the billowy mass of lace and cambric which almost hid the new-born babe whose life had seemed to last for just one hour.

The doctor had hastened away from the house of mourning. Of what use to stay? He could do nothing to heal the broken heart which now beat overquickly with longing for its dead; nothing to chase the unshed tears away from eyes too proud to manifest a woman's weakness, even while the mind knew all of a woman's pain. All that man might do for man, he did. One strong, silent hand-clasp, acknowledged by a single word of gratitude in a voice made stern by suffering, was all that had passed before he left the house. Now, as he drove across the wide moor in the early dawn, he thought of the lonely man whom he had just left,—wifeless husband, childless father—for both

mother and child were dead! Bride and babe lay side by side. He had tried, with all the art of which he was the master, to save them—and had failed. It had happened so before and, he reflected, it would happen so again in spite of four thousand years of science. Death, he thought, is cruel. This young wife, wedded but a year ago! Could not death have passed her by for a little while at least? Ah, well!—and the doctor sighed,—no doubt she understands by now; no doubt by now, she has solved the problem of her being!

Nay! not yet does she know, even as she is known. How should she learn the law of Life from the accursed mouth of death—death, which knows not Life, nor ever can. Nay, she does not know as yet. How should she? Did she not die believing in a power apart from God? Search, my brother, search the deep things of *Good.* Listen to the words of him called "Wonderful," for they are light and they are life, holding within their sacred depth no hint nor taste of foul corruption's breath. Hast thou not heard, my brother man, that "Jesus Christ hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," thereby revealing Man, reconciled to God—Man forever glorious in the deathless reality of his true being?

Awake! Awake, thou sleeping world! Too long hast thou lain quiescent, fast-locked within the arms of mental lethargy. Too long hast thou dreamed the years away. Turn thee! Rouse thee! Open thy fast-closed eyes! For behold the *day* is at hand!

Get thee hence, thou deep oblivion! Thou phantom Death, thou dark Deception, get thee hence! Back! Back to thy native nothingness thou must return. For

see! What says the prophet of the Lord? "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;" thus, for "them that believe" the world is flooded with his light, flooded with the light of Life eternal and Love divine: for God is Life, and "God is Love" and God is "All-in-All." What then is death?—and where?

Part V

WHITE WARP AND WOOF IN THE LOOM OF MIND

CHAPTER XXXIV

LOOKING TOWARDS THE LIGHT

And a little child shall lead them.

—*Isaiah.*

Dr. Reynolds, tired out with his anxious and sleepless night, now gave the reins to the young lad who sat beside him. Glancing idly round the moor, he was startled to see a dark figure, sharply defined against the sky-line; it was that of a man seated in an attitude of deep dejection and apparently quite still.

"Drive on and draw up round there," he said to his youthful groom, pointing to a sharp bend in the road.

The boy obeyed, and Dr. Reynolds climbed down a little stiffly from his seat, for he was not so active as he had been before that sharp attack of gout a year ago.

"Wait here for me," he ordered, and turning, he retraced his way on foot along the road, until that still figure came again into view. Apparently the man had not stirred a hair's breadth; and now, though yet a long way off, the doctor recognised the Bishop of Exminster by his dress, and a sudden fear shot through his mind. There was something unnatural in the rigid quiet of the man's great form. But as he approached him, his anxiety was suddenly relieved, for Bishop Saul raised his head and spoke.

"Have you come for me, Reynolds? Is is over?"

"No, man, no."

The doctor spoke roughly, as a man will sometimes when in pain, and the old doctor was both pained and shocked at the stricken look upon the face before him, for he read more than grief in Robert Saul's wild eyes as they questioned him.

"Here, man!" he said peremptorily, "swallow two of these, and then drive home with me."

The Bishop took the tiny pellets, and laughed gently, and for a long time.

"The same that Malcolm takes?" he said; "no, thank you, Reynolds, *my* heart is right enough!" and he laughed again in a quiet unmirthful way which made Doctor Reynolds uneasy.

He did not, however, press the point, but instead he sat down beside his friend and mused for some minutes in silence. Twice he almost spoke, but twice he closed his lips upon the words.

"I have thought of something," he said at last, "that you might try for Malcolm. I do not understand much about it—it is mental suggestion of a sort, I suppose—but I cannot disbelieve in its curative power; the time has passed for *that*. Have you ever heard of Christian Science?"

Now the Bishop's laugh rang out so loud and harsh across the moor that it reached the waiting groom, startling him into a lazy wonder whence it came.

"Yes," the Bishop answered, "Yes! *Yes!*"

Bishop Saul looked at his friend and laughed again. Had he ever heard of Christian Science? Why, had not Winnie sat beside him the long night through, as, indeed, she had sat many times of late, usually upon

the arm of his chair as she had done that night not long before she died, and had she not asked again the self-same question which she had asked him then? Had not the darkness down there in the valley shrieked with Winnie's question? Had not Winnie's form floated round his feet in the early dawn! Remembering, Robert Saul laughed again and again, but very quietly now. Then, he became suddenly silent, and after awhile he answered, as he had answered Winnie that night in London.

"I know all about Christian Science." And as he pressed his hands upon his burning eyes, he said once more. "Yes—*yes*—I know all about Christian Science."

"Then you know that it heals the sick?" the doctor spoke emphatically, wishful to steady the Bishop's wandering thought: but he was frightened at the unexpected result of his words, for the man beside him rose upon the instant to his feet repeating, over and over again with a new excitement in his tone; "It heals the sick!" The next moment he was out of sight. Round the bend of the road Robert Saul came upon the doctor's waiting cart. "Ah!" he muttered softly, and leapt upon the step. And now the astonished groom held on as best he might, looking backward and wondering where his master was, for Bishop Saul was whipping the horse savagely, and the animal, used only to a placid hand, reared upon the road.

"Horse fresh?" The Bishop's tone was curt.

"Yes, sir, just out," and the boy stole an uneasy glance at his strange companion.

For now they raced along the road until they reached a spot from which a footpath branched across

the moor. The stern driver bent his hand, and turned the horse's head; and now they rocked from side to side as, in perilous haste, he drove the cart along a path made only by the foot of man. But it saved two miles or more, and Malcolm lay at the other end, so what mattered if they pitched and staggered like a ship upon a roughened sea? Now the cottage was in sight, and the Bishop drew the horse up on his haunches and left the trap, even while it tilted with the sudden halt; another moment, and he stood by Malcolm's bed; then, as he looked upon the child, his wild excitement fell into a short calm.

Quietly leaving the boy's room he entered his own and unlocked a drawer. Selecting a bundle of papers, he withdrew from among them an old postcard. Carefully scanning the few lines which were written upon it, he replaced it, but not until he had noted in his pocket-book a certain address—the address which had been sent to his sister, Winnie, not long before she died. He now returned to Malcolm's room and deftly, though with a trembling hand, he wound a blanket round the boy and then gently lifted him upon his breast. If he heard the nurse's frightened protest, he did not heed it, further than to whisper sternly, "Hush! do not wake the child!"

Now he sat in the cart again and Malcolm lay sleeping in his strong embrace, while he roughly bade the youth drive to Saignton Station. Five miles before them still! five long miles of rough moorland road!

"Drive faster," the Bishop said, and leant across and reached the whip.

Swift rush! wild gallop! and the good horse flung the soft earth back upon his track, as he answered to

the stern voice which urged him on. The terrified groom supposed that he drove a madman to the train, and cared not how soon he reached the safe company of his fellow men.

"Faster, man!" the Bishop hissed between set lips, whitened by the stressful thought that ruled his mind. One minute more and they would be there! When hark! a whistle sounds! a shriek rises shrilly through the air, and white smoke greets them as they reach the station yard.

The groom, speechless with dismay, stole a look at the man beside him. The Bishop's head was bent upon the sleeping child, but quite suddenly he raised it.

"Quick," he said, "drive through the Park, by the south gate—we may catch it yet at Trentwood. There is no other train to-day."

The boy hesitated. "The public is no' let in till ten," he said, "I dursn't do it."

"Then lighten the trap, you fool," and the now desperate man rose to his feet and lifting the lad threw him upon the road.

Then cradling his living burden once more upon his breast, he closed his right hand upon the reins. At the same moment, embracing the child in his strong left arm, he turned the cart about and headed for the south gates of Trentwood Park.

"Ho, Death!" he cried. "I will race with thee, and Malcolm, little Malcolm, shall be the prize! O grave!" he whispered, "where is thy sting and where thy victory?"

The Park gates were but half open, and as the horse dashed through them, the cart left its mark upon the post. A sleepy keeper turned and shouted his startled

protest to ears fast closed to outward sound, because attentive only to the inward thought. The garden gates stood open! Good! he would turn in there, for thus they could save a good half-mile. The Bishop drew so sharply upon the near rein that, for one breath of time, the trap stood at a perilous angle, and the man held the child closer with a sudden fear, lifting him high upon his breast. And now!—a rush along the smooth white drive between the blood-red rhododendrons! a flash past my lord's open window, and the way will lie downhill. Soon *they* will be at Trentwood Station, while the train must wend its slow and circuitous way around the outskirts of his lordship's land and up a long and steep incline before it can be there.

"Aha!" and the Bishop shivers as a sudden thought leaps within his brain. "The lower gate! what if *that* should be locked?"

But Robert Saul, mad or sane, was not a man to succumb to any adverse circumstance without a goodly fight. So he set his strong white teeth and stung the good horse into a larger stride. As he did so a dark shadow seemed to fall across his eyes and he swung a little in his seat, but almost instantly it was gone, and he sat upright again, and now, he faced the gate, and saw that it was shut! But not locked, perhaps! Shortening the reins, he leapt from the cart, and the weary horse, though bravely answering to the man's great need, was yet glad to rest, if only while the gate should swing upon its hinges. His sides rose and fell with distressful effort, as the sweat ran out from every pore, while he quivered in each limb.

The Bishop, careful even in his desperate haste to note that Malcolm no longer slept but moaned in half-

unconscious pain, gently rested the child across the bottom of the cart. The gate was locked, but Robert Saul was not beaten yet—he would fight this battle to the end. For one helpless second only he glanced around; the next, he stooped swiftly and wound his great arms about a baby sapling which grew beside the fence. Now tree and man swayed as one; then the man hurled his concentrated weight upon the sapling's bending form till it slowly yielded its bleeding roots into the hand that tore them from their home.

Robert Saul, possessed—as sometimes is the case with those whom men call mad—with a strength beyond his own, lifted the tree, and swung it at the fence, and soon the way was open where the broken timber lay, for it proved to be less strong than new paint made it appear, and man and cart stood together upon the further side.

Now he drove upon the country road again. A short mile of ruts and hardened mud, six hundred yards of narrow lane, and Trentwood Station would be in sight! Bishop Saul knew every inch of the high banks which he now found upon either side of him, for he had left the moor beyond the southern gate and was nearing his boyhood's home; just here the lane narrowed abruptly and the drive was nearly over, when the turn of a sharp corner brought to view a farm cart making slow way towards them.

"Into the hedge," the Bishop shouted. "Quick! for I must catch the train!"

The rustic driver, sympathetic, but unused to hurry, jerked his horse's mouth and with slow persuasion brought his cart to a tedious halt. It scarce yielded half the road, its great wheel crushing the white and

purple periwinkle which formed a bright mosaic upon either side of the grassy lane. He doubted, however, that the light vehicle could find room to pass him, for the road here was none too wide for one!

By a mighty effort of self-control, Bishop Saul curbed his action to a quiet guiding of his horse, for he believed that there was just room for them to pass, but to work out such a problem correctly with a life at stake, needed a calm which strained his nerves almost, it seemed, to snapping point.

"You'll no' catch the train I'm thinking."

The rustic's placid interest was more than a desperate man could bear, and Robert Saul rose up to his full height and leapt upon the road with Malcolm in his arms! Ah! the wildness of that wild race, and the thunderous beating of his heart!

"Your ticket, sir?"

The Bishop paused long enough to stand quite still, while he laughed quietly in the man's face; then, even as the guard shouted, "Keep back," he wrenched the man's hand from the van door and, holding one arm strongly about the child, stood within the train.

He sat through the long journey as they crept upon their way, like a dreamer half awake. That mad wild drive was ever with him! Mad, in the manner of its doing, as is the action sped onward by the mind diseased, but sane in its underlying purpose; as is the impelling motive that stirs to freedom the prisoned creature bent upon escape.

. . . . .

The service was well begun. It was the interval of silent prayer, and "man," shutting the door upon materiality, sought audience with the divine Principle

of all being, God. A wonderful calm holds dominion over the heart which acknowledges only the power of Mind and refuses to bow before a lesser king; thus great peace prevailed among that quiet congregation. Some measure of that peace indeed, which passeth understanding but which *comes with understanding*, and which heralds its glorious appearing by working the works of God.

Suddenly, though upon the surface only of that deep harmony, there appeared a wave of discord. A stranger stood at the door—a "wayfaring man," battle-stained and travel-worn. He sought sanctuary in their midst and healing for his wounds. In tones rendered harsh by the pain that moved his utterance, he voiced his cry for help.

"Lady Cecil Gwynne!"

Cecil Gwynne rose quietly and left her seat, as Robert Saul strode through the silent throng and placed the child he carried in her arms.

"Malcolm," he said; "Malcolm . . . dying!" And his tired eyes sought hers and asked the question that his quivering lips refused to frame.

"It is the ever-present healing Christ," she answered softly, "who said, 'I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.'"

CHAPTER XXXV

THE QUESTION

What is truth?

—*Pilate.*

"I HAVE come, Cecil," Bishop Saul spoke gravely and with evident effort, "to thank you. Malcolm's health appears to be perfectly restored."

"He will grow even stronger every day," Lady Cecil Gwynne replied; "the child has gained a wonderful understanding of the Truth in a short time."

Bishop Saul rose from his chair and walked uneasily about the room. It was long since he and Cecil Gwynne had talked alone together in this room, and his thoughts were in a turmoil.

"I met an old College friend the day I took Malcolm to school," he said; "James Campbell was at New College with me, and it turns out that you know both him and his young brother Robby, of whom you must have often heard Malcolm speak, for, when he came home from India, it was Robby Campbell whom I asked to shepherd him during his first term."

The Bishop paused, and Cecil Gwynne wondered a little what bearing this apparently irrelevant information could have upon the subject of their discussion, when he continued, "I was surprised to find that James Campbell has become a Christian Scientist; indeed it appears that he and Robby were deeply interested in it before the two little boys first met."

"Why surprised?" Cecil asked gently.

Bishop Saul laughed a little awkwardly and spoke with some hesitation. "Well, the fact is, Campbell is a clever fellow and a long-headed, cautious Scotchman to boot,——"

"Therefore unlikely to be led away by foolish fancies you would say," and Cecil smiled.

"No, I cannot any longer regard Christian Science as a fad," the Bishop replied gravely; "I am too grateful for what it has given me not to make a just acknowledgment of the benefits received from it, but I am still full of doubt. To tell the truth, I am even more impressed by the change in Malcolm's disposition than by his wonderful restoration to health. I always loved the boy, but he was full of faults. He is far from perfect yet," and Robert Saul smiled as he remembered a certain boyish escapade of recent date which might have led to serious consequences, had not Malcolm owned up and faced the fire like a man: "but he is much less egotistical and more loving than he used to be." He paused; then added abruptly, "I do not understand *how* the healing is done; I do not, I repeat," and his face softened as he spoke, "attempt to deny that it *is* done. Malcolm is a new creature, body and mind."

Cecil Gwynne opened a little book which lay close at hand and slowly turned the leaves until she found the page she sought. "This book teaches how the healing is done," she answered. "'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures'* is our text book, and we study it daily; indeed it is not possible to really understand Christian Science without doing so." She closed the book and added; "The sick are healed in Christian

*By Mary Baker G. Eddy.

Science by the application of the law of Spirit; we regard God as the perfect *Creator, Organiser* and *Governor* of man and the universe. As surely as the patient comes into conscious sympathy with the law of Spirit—Life, Love and Truth—and remains sympathetically under its protection, so surely is he healed of his sickness."

Bishop Saul did not immediately reply, and when he did he spoke more quietly than before; "I myself," he said, "have been more aware of a wonderful calm which seemed to rule my mind of late than of the physical healing, but I too am perfectly well now. Still there is much that I cannot accept, much that antagonises me, in Christian Science; and I hate your text book," he spoke less quietly now, "I cannot read it, I wish that it had been written by a man."

Lady Cecil smiled. "I have met others," she said, "who felt the same at first, having entirely overlooked the fact, which is so clearly brought out in the Bibile, that God has constantly chosen women to deliver his message. Have you ever observed amongst others this prophecy," and Cecil opened a Bible and read aloud from the Revised Version, "'The Lord giveth the word; The women that publish the tidings are a great host'? Wycliffe, you remember, was so hated in his time that his very bones were unearthed and burnt, and the ashes thrown upon a stream, in order that they might be carried off and for ever lost in the sea. But now millions bless his memory. Luther, too! Indeed all reformers, who stir up the sleeping thought, are hated by the majority of their contemporaries. If the author of 'Science and Health' had lived two hundred, or even a hundred years ago, she would be

viewed by the twentieth century with calmer eyes, and sensitive human nature would no longer take offence, where only love is meted out."

Bishop Saul made no direct answer but took from his pocket a newspaper cutting which he had neatly removed with a pair of scissors from the columns of a "London daily."

"According to some," he remarked, as he handed the cutting to his companion, "Mrs. Eddy did not write 'Science and Health.' In fact your brother tells me that she claims as her own the work of a man who, being dead, naturally cannot protest."

"Upon the other hand the dead man cannot inform the world that he did not write the book," Lady Cecil replied quietly, "whereas Mrs. Eddy has, long ago, unquestionably vindicated her copyright in a court of law and thus legally established her position as the sole author of 'Science and Health.' But no Christian Scientist needs any such proof of the authenticity of her authorship, because they understand and prove daily that out of evil good cannot come. This false accusation against Mrs. Eddy is no new thing, but merely an old story raked up from time to time by those who, in many cases, thus do themselves less than justice; and it saddens one to see men and women, whom one knows to be capable of much good, carried away by an unreasoning and therefore unreasonable emotion born of the heated brain and material senses. My brother's views upon this matter," she added, "are now curiously mixed. He does not attempt to deny that Christian Science heals; also he admires the general character and citizenship of the Christian Scientist. He necessarily meets a certain number, now that this

philosophy is penetrating all professions and classes; indeed, he tells me that he enjoys discussing matters of general importance with them, because he finds that their mental attitude is usually large-minded, calm and thoughtful, and he observes that they are exceptionally alert and active. His objection to Christian Science from a religious point of view is, as you know, extreme; yet he does not, like you, despise the text book. On the contrary I have heard him speak to others in terms of admiration of its diction, though entirely disagreeing with the ethics therein set forth."

"He cannot tolerate Mrs. Eddy." Robert Saul spoke almost passionately; this matter always stirred him in an unaccountable manner.

Lady Cecil looked grave as she replied: "And yet he knows really nothing about her."

"He believes that she did not write the book which she poses as having written, and that is quite enough to make an honourable man very angry," Bishop Saul answered quickly.

"But he has no proof to offer in support of his conviction," Cecil Gwynne replied gently, "whereas——"

"I don't know that it matters much to me, whether she did or did not write your text book," her companion interrupted; "it has an enormous circulation and she undoubtedly makes a fortune from the sale."

"The book inevitably circulates rapidly; it is impregnated with life," Lady Cecil replied. "A friend of mine wrote," she said, "a book on ancient history, which he sells at two guineas, and you pay sometimes thirty shillings for the biography of a public man, or for a work on medical science, but I have yet to learn

that the sick have been healed of hopeless disease by the perusal of any such book. If there lives an author who does not secure all the profit he can from the sale of his books, I am not acquainted with him, and certainly the labourer has every right to reap the harvest, which his or her individual hand has sown. Does not the Bible teach," she continued, " that ' thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn '? Does not Paul say, ' if we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things '? Moreover did not God give Solomon riches and honour above all the kings which had been before him, because he asked of Him wisdom and knowledge? Does not the Master promise that he who seeks first ' the kingdom ' shall be provided with all that he needs? God's law is one of abundant good: He knows nothing of human limitations nor of poverty, both of which are surely most ungodlike conditions. Why does a critical world quarrel with a woman, whose life's work has, by the grace of God, resulted in the salvation of men and women and little children from hopeless misery, while it fawns upon the multi-millionaire, nor pauses to ask whence come the dollars that build up this charity or that? Not that it occurs to me," she continued, " to ask how any individual obtains or disposes of his income, for a personal income is the private property of the man to whom it belongs and is his to dispose of as he pleases. Why does the world criticise unfavourably the pecuniary position of an American lady, whose wealth is the result of a lifetime of broad study, deep thought and careful research, while it does not grudge the fee that often runs into three figures, nor the title bestowed on the celebrated

surgeon of the present day? The successful barrister, novelist, manufacturer, inventor, artist, philosopher, poet, pass upon their way unchallenged by opprobrious interference; whether rich or poor, their income is regarded as their own. The superficial thought of the day has constituted itself its brother's judge in the case of Mrs. Eddy, but it certainly does not maintain a judicial attitude in this matter, for it evinces a bias due to a hasty judgment, which is in its turn usually the offspring of ignorance."

They talked for some time longer, while Lady Cecil put before Bishop Saul certain metaphysical points which he admitted he had overlooked. He did not attempt to answer them, but finally rose, with some reluctance, to take his leave. As she gave him her hand, Cecil Gwynne smiled and said: "Do you not think that we have been discussing the private affairs of Mary Baker Eddy in a manner in which you certainly would not tolerate her discussion of your own? It does not apparently occur to those whose natural refinement keeps them from mental interference with the lives of other well-known men and women, that the same courtesy should be evinced towards an American lady whose private affairs no more concern them than the private affairs of any other public man or woman concern you or me."

Again, Bishop Saul did not answer his hostess, but bidding her good-bye he turned his steps in the direction of Richmond. He felt at sea and longed for the comparative quiet of the Park, in which to dwell upon his recent conversation with Cecil Gwynne.

In reality he was more impressed by the scientific aspect of the matter which she set before him, than

by anything else that she had said. His own attitude was one of frank dislike towards the author of "Science and Health,"—a dislike which he deliberately did not analyse—but upon consideration he saw that the attitude adopted by Lord Brecon and others who thought with him, was untenable: as Lady Cecil had said, the unerring law of cause and effect ruled it out of court. For a man to admit, as did Brecon, that Christian Scientists stand, mentally and morally, above the average, and that their text book is not only worthy of praise but bears fruit of decided value; for that same man to assert that the hand which circulates this book and which has in addition built up little by little a huge organisation that is obviously increasing daily in importance and weight, is soiled by an act of deliberate dishonesty; that the same hand which gives forth these good results is impelled to action by a mercenary mind,—is in fact to admit that out of evil good can come; whereas the Bible and science both teach, as Cecil Gwynne had pointed out, that like produces like and not its opposite.

Longing to know more of the power which gave him back his almost dead, Robert Saul had of late sought every opportunity to discuss Christian Science, and yet he plainly saw that if he would remain at his post in the Church of England, he had best withdraw at once from all connection with this subject. Where might not this search lead him? He almost trembled as he thought of the radical change which it might come to mean in his successful and now well-regulated life.

And so it was that for some weeks after his conversation with Lady Cecil Gwynne, the Bishop stayed

away from London, but he grew less happy every day; the sweet calm, which had for some time possessed him, was constantly disturbed by a mental fermentation which seemed to bring unwelcomed problems to the surface of his mind.

Malcolm was home now for the holidays and had begged that he might bring his friend Robby Campbell with him; and Bishop Saul, rather to his own surprise, had answered readily enough, "By all means." He did more; he wrote to James Campbell and asked him to bring his young brother over and himself stay a few days.

During these summer holidays he often heard the children talk in a way so strange and beautiful that he acquired a habit of being as much with them as his work permitted. Robby Campbell had the straightest way of facing a difficulty, and the simplest, that the Bishop had yet met in a child of thirteen; nevertheless he was often dismayed at the line of thought which Malcolm was rapidly assimilating. He dared not interfere, however; that was the simple truth. For a new nature seemed to be unfolding in the boy, who daily became more joyous and strong.

Perhaps it was because Bishop Saul realised that his nephew would soon reach a point at which decisive action for or against this new religion must be taken, that he decided to call upon Lady Margaret Courcy the next time he went to town.

Cecil Gwynne had not made the smallest effort to influence him in favour of Christian Science, when answering his enquiries upon the subject, though it was evidently all in all to her. Her calm attitude had perhaps piqued him a little. He had expected

that she would do for Christian Science that which she never would do from a personal motive. He found, however, that neither she, nor any of her new friends, made the slightest effort to win converts. They were, it would appear, very sure of the strength of their position, and deemed it neither right nor wise to proselytise those who held views antagonistic to their own. On the other hand, justice compelled Bishop Saul to admit that they spared neither time nor trouble when their practical aid was asked for in cases of sin or sickness; when called upon, they were always ready to help those in need.

Thus the pendulum swung backwards and forwards, until one day the Bishop decided that he would go to town upon the morrow and call upon Lady Margaret Courcy; but no sooner was the morrow with him than pride (though he did not so designate the prompting which bade him remain inactive) urged him to wait a little longer. He finally decided to write a long letter to Cecil Gwynne, for he felt that he could not let the subject rest.

Then one day an incident occurred which caused him to precipitate events in spite of himself. He met Lady Margaret Courcy while walking quietly through the streets of the old Cathedral town. She immediately drew up her ponies and gave him a kindly greeting, and he found that she was in residence at one of her country seats not ten miles from the Palace.

They chatted for some time, but only upon matters of local interest, and when he finally raised his hat, Lady Margaret, though bidding him a genial farewell, did not ask him to call upon her. Of course, the omission might have been purely accidental, or she

might have considered an invitation superfluous, but the Bishop was inclined to think that this was not so, and he saw that, if he really wished to go further in the matter, he must make the first move. The discomfort which he had experienced during his last interview with Margaret Courcy in town, was still fresh in his memory, and he was now not unwilling to justify himself in the eyes of one whom he had always respected above the common.

He grew every day more perturbed in spirit, and finally realised that he could not rest until he had dived to the heart of this great ethical question, for he found that it constantly occupied his mind to the exclusion of many weighty duties.

The only recreation which Bishop Saul allowed himself was a daily country walk of many miles. Wet or fine, he rarely failed to leave the Palace grounds shortly after luncheon; and one day he found that he had directed his steps towards Wortewood—the small country house which belonged to Lady Margaret Courcy.

He found, upon enquiry, that she was at home. While he awaited her, he became aware of a sense of rest which he attributed to his material environment of the moment. The small drawing-room in which he stood was panelled with oak and the dark surround of the room formed a rich foil to a great china bowl which Lady Margaret had evidently filled herself with roses. He had known her for years, and knew her lavish way of gathering flowers. She only gathered them because she loved to have them near her, and these roses she had picked with bud and branching stalk, just as they grew, and now, though it was

late summer, they scented the air with memories of June.

When Lady Margaret Courcy entered the room Bishop Saul thought, as he had often thought before, that she fitted her position better than anyone else whom he knew. Always dignified and always calm, she impressed him to-day with an added charm—a certain gentle kindness to which he could give no more precise name, but which immediately relieved his own slight embarrassment and made it possible for him to state at once the purpose of his visit.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE ANSWER

I report as a man may of God's work—
All's love, yet all's law.

—*Browning.*

Bishop Saul seated himself in the Venetian chair which his hostess indicated and with his usual directness said, "I find myself very much perplexed about my little ward, Malcolm Stuart. He has been healed by Christian Science, and I myself have derived much benefit from it, but there are many points which I do not in the least understand, points which I do not therefore feel justified in allowing Malcolm to accept; and yet, upon my word, I am not sure that, as far as the boy is concerned, it is not already too late to prevent it. Only yesterday I heard him discussing with Robby Campbell, a young Christian Science friend of his, that tremendous problem which has defeated the greatest intellects in the world—the origin and ultimate of man."

Lady Margaret smiled; "Do you not remember the Master's words, 'Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein'? I, too," she added, "used to marvel at the insight of the little child when regarding the deep things of God, but now I realise

what Paul meant by his words, 'For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.' You see," she added, "the spiritual thought of the little child is far less clouded than that of men and women who have eaten freely 'of the tree of the *knowledge* of good *and* evil.' The children have had less time in which to dim their vision by thinking themselves to be as gods."

"I cannot accept your extraordinary views with regard to sin, sickness and death. I see these things all around me." The Bishop spoke very emphatically.

"Jesus and his early followers, also the prophets, *saw* them all around them, but time after time they *proved* divine Love to be a law of annihilation to them. The law of divine Love is the law of natural good, and whenever man sympathetically and understandingly puts himself under the protection of this law, he can prove the omnipresence of Good and the consequent nothingness of suppositional evil."

"Sickness is ordained by the inscrutable wisdom of God; we have no right to say that it is an evil."

The Bishop's tone was final.

"Then why," Lady Margaret asked gently, "do you ever try tc cure it? It was Jesus, the *Way-shower*, who said, 'I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me'; and throughout his ministry he devoted much time to the healing of the sick. Can you tell me of one single

instance in which he, the great Exemplar, said to a sick person, 'This sickness is good—it is of God—and you must bear it patiently'? You know that the Gospels do not contain one single record of the kind, while in Matthew, where we read that Jesus did not heal, we are also told the reason, namely, the unbelief of the people—'He did not many mighty works there *because* of their unbelief.' Again, if sickness is God's work, why did Jesus command his students to cure it—to undo God's work? He never would have taught his followers to undo that which *God* had done. But these are his words, 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead.'"

"That command was given to the disciples alone, and was enforced for a limited period only."

"Your statement is hardly an answer to my question," Lady Margaret said quietly; "but can you support the statement which you have just made by one single word recorded in the New Testament?"

"It is the accepted explanation of the departure of the healing power from the Church—accepted by the Church for many hundreds of years."

"Granted," Lady Margaret replied, "but that does not constitute it a part of God's law, that law which Jesus said was *Love*. Do you not think that the human mind is apt to furnish a *man*-made explanation for its own sins of omission? Is it too much, for instance, to say that scholastic theology, failing to work those works of which the great Exemplar spoke, seeks to use God as a peg upon which to hang its own sins of omission, by declaring that He has withdrawn from man the promised power to heal the sick through prayer alone? It thus attempts to cast the

burden of man's failure upon God, accusing Him of all sorts of inconsistencies, of which omnipresent Good, omnipotent Love, must necessarily be incapable. In Jeremiah xxiii. we read, 'The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. . . . And as for the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the Lord, I will even punish that man and his house. . . . And the burden of the Lord shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God.'"

"All true Christians believe quite as much as you do in the efficacy of prayer; Christian Scientists have not a monopoly in faith!" Bishop Saul spoke a little roughly, stirred beyond his wont.

Lady Margaret smiled gravely as she answered: "For anyone to monopolise the free gift of God to man would of course be an illogical impossibility; furthermore the daily prayer of the Christian Scientist is that 'the Christ' may be so uplifted as to draw *all* men to him. Undoubtedly," she continued, "the prayer of true faith has always been answered, and isolated instances of the healing of the sick through prayer are upon record, but it has remained for Christian Science to teach mankind that fuller, deeper faith which is, in a measure, the understanding of man's Principle—God. Man naturally trusts that power of whom he has some understanding, and whose laws he finds himself able to comprehend, more than he trusts a distant deity whom theology shrouds in impenetrable mystery and gloom. We attach a deeper meaning to faith than

that encompassed by the word 'belief'; we regard blind belief as dangerous, and seek rather to obtain the understanding of God's *law*. If the faith, of which you speak, be all that the Christian needs, why do not the promised 'signs' follow in answer to orthodox Christian prayer? Jesus said, 'These signs shall follow *them that believe;* In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.'"

"God answers prayer in His way, not in ours," the Bishop replied.

"Granted, but Jesus made no reservation when giving the promise that 'these signs shall follow *them that believe.*' He said further, 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' In neither promise is there any hint of reservation nor of limitation. Now we know that many Christians have for years prayed most earnestly for health; why, *if they really believe,* do not they obtain the promised answer to their prayer? At any rate," and Lady Margaret smiled, "it is surely a little unreasonable to quarrel with those who do receive the answer; it is surely a little illogical to declare that those who are able to—and constantly do—*prove their faith by their works,* are more at fault than are those who do *not.* James, you remember, said, 'Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.' He also said, 'The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.'"

Once more the Bishop made no direct answer, but challenged his companion upon another point.

"Your views about death are extraordinary; I had almost said, absurd."

"They are the views of the true monotheist," Lady Margaret replied. "We believe that God is Life, and that all causation, all constitution, all government are embraced within His infinitude. We learn from both the Old and New Testaments that like produces like, and never its opposite. Hence Infinite Life cannot produce death, nor can Infinite Good produce evil. The teaching of the Bible is surely particularly clear upon this point. 'The wages of *sin*,' we read, 'is death'; then why sin and thus earn its wage, death? Again, 'when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.' Now could God, who, you will admit, is *all* Good, produce *sin*—the cause of death—and yet remain entirely good?"

"Of course not," the Bishop answered hastily; "God did not create evil; He permits it."

"How many creators are there?" Lady Margaret asked.

"One," the Bishop answered unhesitatingly, and a little impatiently.

"Then, if there is but one Creator, and *He* did not create evil, who did?" asked Lady Margaret.

"You are asking a question which no one in the world can answer," the Bishop said.

"I am asking a question which the Bible has always answered, and which Jesus himself answered. When speaking of evil he said, 'He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there

is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.' "

"You mean to imply, that all that there is of evil is a lie?"

"Exactly; for God, *Good*, did not create it, and there is but the one Creator, of whom we read that he does not even know evil. Naturally, *Infinite* Good cannot have any knowledge of evil, or he would immediately cease to be entirely Good."

"And death, for instance, you regard as an evil, and therefore born only of a lie? Yet it is a grim reality. I have seen it often; so probably have you."

"The storm was a grim reality, portending death, to the frightened senses of the disciples, but the law of Harmony, of Spirit, Life, set the suppositional laws of matter at naught and calmed the waves. No doubt death appeared as a grim reality to the senses of those who wept over the death of Jairus' daughter; for you remember that when Jesus said, 'She is not dead, but sleepeth,' that 'they laughed him to scorn, *knowing that she was dead.*' Yet Jesus immediately reversed the seeming law of death by placing the maid under the protection of the law of Life—the law of God, Good. He further plainly stated that, 'whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never see death.' If death is a reality, whence came it? From what was it evolved? It could not have germinated within the mind of *Infinite* Life and Love, which you admit to be the one and only Creator."

"Of course God is not the *Creator* of death but, as I said before, He permits it."

"But He is not *Infinite* Good, if He even knows evil. He is not Infinite Life, if there be in reality

any death. Would you hold yourself guiltless, if you permitted a wrong, being the while Omnipotent? For remember, the God whom you profess to *worship* is *All* Mighty."

"We cannot understand these things here; we must have faith and believe that God will unfold them to us in the fulness of time," the Bishop spoke a little wearily.

"But surely it is time that we should seek some solution of the problem which has baffled us for so long. What is man, to say that life must end? What are these 'imaginations,' that seek to exalt themselves against the power of the Most High? Is not man the image and the likeness of his God, and do we not read that, 'whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it'?"

"Still," the Bishop persisted, "people die."

"Yes, because they believe they must; for remember, 'as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.' The world is fast asleep. Mesmerised by that false phantom Fear, it dreams the dream of death. It knows not friend from foe. Whence came the life of man if not from God? Yet here lies the world, fast-locked within the craven arms of Fear, softly blaspheming in the name of 'resignation'! How can life, which is of God, resign itself to death, God's opposite? How dare man hail death a friend, when God, his Father and his King, is Life? Yes, the mortal dies, forgetting that through the gates of hell man will never enter heaven. He bends the knee to death, forgetting that thus he denies not only the God who gave man birth but also the Saviour who triumphed over death, in order to show the world its nothingness."

"Do you not expect to die?" The Bishop asked the question amazedly.

"I—," Lady Margaret's tone was grave and humble as she answered, "I am but just rousing from the Adam-sleep to heed the cry which has resounded throughout the ages:—'Why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.'"

"Christian Scientists die, and will," Robert Saul interrupted again a little roughly.

"To say that we of this generation will not die would be to assert that which we have not yet proved, but every time that a case of sickness, regarded as hopeless by materia medica, is cured by Christian Science, death has been successfully fought. Because the young student, who works out a sum in simple addition correctly, fails when trying to work out a more difficult problem, you do not question the *principle* of mathematics, but rather tell the student to try again, and work more carefully. Because the Christian Scientist, temporarily overwhelmed by the false beliefs of the ages and by the unbelief of millions of human minds, fails in a degree, *that* does not prove man's Principle to be at fault. Nor can *anything* make the opposite of God, Good, righteous. In Science we face death as an evil and as an enemy and know that, in time, it must be overcome. For he who is armoured in light, must eventually triumph over darkness and delusion."

After a short silence, Lady Margaret continued, "Why did Jesus, the great Exemplar, so joyously break bread upon the Galilean shore, *after the resur-*

rection? A deep purpose lay beneath all that Jesus did, and Christian Scientists believe that he celebrated, upon the shore of Galilee, the most stupendous victory that the world has ever seen—the victory of Life, eternally triumphant over death; the victory of Love, great vanquisher of a world's mean hate; the victory of Truth, total exterminator of the lie."

Though the Bishop did not say so, he was impressed by the view which Lady Margaret now put before him, and it was a fact that he had never before considered what might have been the purpose underlying that early morning meal. It was undoubtedly true that his thought had hitherto halted at the manifestation of the resurrected Lord and had then been apt to leap from that to the Ascension, and the incident to which Margaret Courcy now referred, though of course very familiar to him, had not hitherto assumed any great importance in his eyes. Now, it suddenly stood out with a new-born emphasis and held his attention as it never had done before.

They talked for some time longer, and he was further impressed by the justice of Lady Margaret's calm attitude towards the Leader of Christian Science. She assured him that it was thus that all true Christian Scientists regarded Mrs. Eddy, in spite of the mistaken statements to the contrary which were so commonly circulated by those who were obviously antagonistic. It was, he saw, not only natural but inevitable that those whose whole lives had been revolutionised and made happy by the application of Christian Science, should feel deeply grateful to the writer of their text book; and it was unquestionably a sound judgment which had so successfully organised a Society of such

magnitude and regenerative power—an organisation which had, moreover, an undoubted claim to be regarded as dignified in the method and presentation of its work, and which proved by the calmness and rapidity of its growth and the intellectual quality of its component parts, that it stood beyond the reach of angry criticism or ignorant abuse. Robert Saul also recognised, though with a curious reluctance, that the thought which forwarded a work of so much grace must proceed from a heart both loving and pure. He would not admit, even to himself, that his views with regard to Christian Science were in danger of reversal, but, in spite of himself, he saw the reasonableness of Lady Margaret's final remarks.

"We regard Mrs. Eddy," she said, "much I suppose as the more grateful among the Israelites regarded Moses. The wise man of the twentieth century," she added, "stands always ready with a really open mind to learn from his brother of the past, and while seeking to emulate all that is good, he is, upon the other hand, careful to glean a useful warning from that brother's mistakes. These mistakes are too often repeated by the mortal of to-day; for the condition of mind which stoned the 'man of God' thousands of years ago and later gave the early Christian to the lions, now cries 'Down with him' to the mob of to-day, while pointing the finger of scorn at all—whether religious, political or domestic—who seek to uphold a high ideal, for mortal man does not wish to take up his cross nor to climb the hill to Calvary. But," she added, "the fury of the mortal can do the standard bearers of Truth no harm, for to-day, as always, it rests secure in Mind, serene, invulnerable, far above the reach of ignorance

and hate: while Love triumphant reigns, stately and calm, above the bubbles of the human mind, which, rising to the surface, have their little day, but, offspring of material thought, they burst even as they rise upon the ever-changing bosom of an angry sea, thus losing all identity."

As Robert Saul walked home through the early evening hours, the lovely English country took on an aspect of unwonted substantiality, and he asked himself, quite suddenly, what if this beautiful theory should be true? what if death should be but a phenomenon of human experience? what if the great oaks under which he walked, and the wild fern about his feet, were but the counterfeit of the real? Glancing away to the left, his eye was arrested by a tree, blasted and blackened by the electricity which had changed it from a thing of strength and beauty into an unsightly and useless item. Regarding it as it marred the landscape across which he gazed, Bishop Saul said to himself that assuredly life was a more beautiful thing than death—a grander and more Godlike expression of the Infinite. Was it possible that a tremendous problem had been solved? Was it possible that death could be relegated to the position of a mere negation by the realisation of the allness of Good, Life, and the consequent understanding of the absence of evil? He saw then, logically, that if God were, as Christian Scientists believed, Life and All-in-All, He must necessarily be the Infinite "Affirmation." This being so, death could have no real existence and must be regarded merely as absence of Life. As his quickened thought pursued this new train of reasoning, the Bishop instantly realised that hitherto he had attributed to

death an importance which no logic would support. What was death, after all, except unconsciousness of life? Then it would necessarily follow that, to avoid death, *man needs only to become continuously conscious of life.* These people regarded God as Life, hence their continuous endeavour to cleave in thought to God. Should any individual succeed in so doing and thus enter into conscious and unbroken communion with Life, it would logically follow that he could never know death, for it is not a mental possibility to be fully conscious of two opposites at the same instant.

Thus far Bishop Saul could follow the argument, but no further, for he did not believe that man, as he knew him, could ever attain to any such perfect state of consciousness, and so he once again sought to put the whole matter from his mind, and entered, more vigorously than before, into the task of reorganising the interior economy of his diocese. Yet certain startling figures which Lady Margaret Courcy had quoted, just as he left her house, constantly recurred to his mind. If it were indeed true, as she stated, that among that enormous membership of many thousands belonging to the Mother Church of her denomination in Boston, the percentage of deaths was so incomparably smaller than the percentage which took place under materia medica in the city of Boston, she would appear to be right in her assertion that longevity was undoubtedly upon the increase and that, in a degree, death was being overcome by the light of Christian Science. Further, he knew enough of Christian Scientists—he had met many while in London—to recognise that the membership of all Christian Science Churches is composed, in a great measure, of

people whom no insurance company would have accepted, when they first handed over their cases to the Christian Science practitioner. He knew therefore that this was the stock from among which those remarkable statistics had been taken. But Bishop Saul did not want to be convinced of the substantiality of Christian Science, and so he deliberately turned from the subject and focussed his thought upon other matters; nor would he admit, even to his own heart, that his mental attitude was one of greater uncertainty than before his long conversation with Lady Margaret Courcy.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE SWING OF THE PENDULUM

Choose you this day whom ye will serve.
—*Joshua.*

The period which immediately followed upon his long talk with Lady Margaret Courcy was, to Bishop Saul, one of acute discomfort. He felt that he had reached the time in his life which William Shakespeare—that close student of humanity—so well portrayed when he wrote:

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows, and in miseries.

But what he did not clearly understand was the magnitude of the choice which lay before him. Two roads were his from which to choose; that he *did* understand; and the mortal longed to follow the one which quite certainly led to honour and renown. But Robert Saul was conscious of a power which at times threatened entirely to overrule this worldly desire, by impelling his thought in an opposite direction. What was this mighty force at work upon his soul? He would not stop to ask, but sought repeatedly to crush it, declaring that he would not be controlled against his will, and by a power which had come unbidden into his life! Thus he wooed to his side his bitterest

foe and trampled under foot the seed which held for him the knowledge of eternal Good.

Next Sunday would be the first Sunday in September, and with something of a shock Bishop Saul remembered that, when first taking over the duties of the diocese, he had acquiesced in a suggestion, put forward by his predecessor, that he should take the opportunity in the early autumn, when the old town of Exminster was always unusually full, to preach his second sermon upon Christian Science. "It was getting a hold in the neighbourhood," Bishop Long had explained, "and needed to be stamped out, before it did more harm."

So the Bishop had pledged himself to preach on this subject upon the first Sunday in September, and now the day was almost upon him. There was no escape, and he wanted none. Indeed, he declared again, as he had declared once before, that he was very ready to do his plain duty in this matter. Undoubtedly Christian Science had saved Malcolm's life, and he was not ungrateful, but obviously he, as a conspicuous representative of the established Church, could not tacitly encourage, by leaving it unmolested in his diocese, a doctrine so unorthodox as was this new religion which, though undoubtedly founded on Truth, had branched into a conspicuous heresy. He knew that Lady Margaret Courcy was held in much respect in the neighbourhood, and that, amongst others, many of her tenants were already deeply interested in Christian Science.

The early part of the week passed and found the Bishop's sermon still unwritten. Though it was his custom to preach *extempore*, he remembered—and flushed uncomfortably as he recalled the circumstance

—that his previous attempt to preach upon the subject of Christian Science had been a dismal failure, even though he had taken the unusual precaution to write out his sermon upon that occasion. That had been his one failure, and it rankled in a mind grown a little sleek with the success of years. This time he would surpass himself! He would, indeed he must, admit the healing power of Christian Science; he had no desire to do otherwise, but he would point out to the souls entrusted to his guidance the grave danger which threatened those who left the Catholic Church for the shelter of any other fold; and he would suggest that the Church of England should set its house in order and itself heal the sick by prayer. Why not? If these people could recover a life so nearly lost as had been Malcolm's by the power of prayer alone, why should not others do the same? Moreover, was the apostolic succession to be set at naught by these nonconformists? Surely those who were spiritually endowed—highly educated theologians, men thoroughly *au fait* with the early history of the Christian Church —were especially qualified to approach the throne of grace. The Church must of course emphatically dissociate itself from Christian Science in this healing work. It must be clearly understood that it had no connection at all with that organisation, but why should not the Catholic Church obtain the same results by better and more orthodox means?

Why not, Bishop Saul? Why, simply because like produces like and never its opposite. Thus out of the mouth of Love do not come blessings *and* curses, from the same fount do not flow "sweet waters and bitter," and the religion which bows a trembling knee before a

man-made God of good *and* evil—a theoretical God who, alternating between wrath and love, sometimes blesses but more often curses his children—cannot work the works of Him who is entirely good, entirely loving, nay more, *who is Love.*

And so the few remaining days came and went. Many acquaintances had ventured to say to the Bishop that they were looking forward with special interest to his sermon upon the following Sunday: but this was Saturday, and the sermon was, as yet, unshaped within his mind. That day his uncle was so evidently worried than towards evening Malcolm, whose holidays were now nearly over, sat gravely down upon the side of his bed and considered the matter.

"Why," the boy asked himself, "was not Uncle Robert a Christian Scientist?" It had surprised him greatly, as soon as he himself was well enough to understand what had saved his life, that his uncle did not accept, with the blessing, the doctrine through which that blessing had come. Now he plainly saw that "Uncle Robert" was very much troubled about something, and though he quite realised that the Bishop did not like Christian Science, he had no idea that he contemplated the delivery of another sermon upon the subject. Malcolm very distinctly remembered that he had suffered while his uncle preached that sermon in London, and, indeed, looking back, he saw by the aid of the clearer vision which now was his, that it was that very sermon which had first made the subject of Christian Science run so continually through his own mind. He had never told anyone this; he was absolutely loyal to "Uncle Robert," but he definitely dated certain questions which had troubled him all through

his long illness, from that memorable Sunday. Now, he sat upon his bed and asked, "What can be done to make Uncle Robert happy?" And soon he took the only course which could occur to his awakened thought, he laid his trouble before the God whom he had lately learnt was most emphatically "a God at hand" and "a very present help in trouble,"—a Father, in fact, into whose presence a little child might walk without fear or hesitation. The boy made no long prayer about the matter; it was all quite simple. "Uncle Robert" seemed to be unhappy, but God's law was a law of Love, of happiness, and "Uncle Robert" was God's son, it was therefore his divine *right* to be happy. It only needed light, it only needed that "Uncle Robert" should *see* the Truth, and of course he, Malcolm, would ask that the light should so shine upon his uncle's path that he should see clearly just where happiness was waiting for him. It did not enter the child's head that anyone could deliberately shut their eyes to, and turn away from, the thing which had already so cheered their life. Thus the boy, for a short space, held silent commune with Mind, and then went to sleep quite happy in the conviction that those who "ask" shall most surely "receive."

That evening the Bishop rose early from the dinner table and went to his library; in a few moments a servant entered with the last post. Only one letter for his Lordship, but one for which he had looked anxiously for some days. It was from Lady Cecil Gwynne in answer to the long letter which he had written to her after his conversation with Margaret Courcy. He opened it eagerly the moment his servant had left the room.

"I did not hasten to reply to your long letter," Cecil Gwynne wrote, "because I hoped that you would come and see me. You know, do you not, that Christian Scientists do not seek converts, still I am tempted to plead with you for once. For once I ask you to look this thing fairly in the face. Of you, a man of my own race, I ask, What has made England great? Is it not, in a measure, her fairness which, by endearing her to her conquered foe, has made her dominion widespread, because *enduring*, enabling her rule to settle into strength where other nations have advanced only to retreat. Of you—once a public school boy—who, bat in hand or foot to ball or again with body bent forward for your stroke, learnt during those dearly loved days of your English boyhood the simple lesson of fair play, I ask neither more nor less but that you should look this Science *fairly* in the face. Do not condemn it unheard, simply because it is new and seemingly hard to understand. Turn it here and turn it there. Search it to the core. It does not shun enquiry. You do not condemn the prisoner at the bar without a fair trial; you would not deliver judgment upon any point in astronomy without first really studying the matter; you do not discuss politics without carefully reading your daily papers. Again, you did not attempt higher mathematics until you had accepted the principle that one and one are two, and then gradually progressed in wisdom and in knowledge from that given point. Can you not accept God, Good, as Principle and as '*All-in-All*'? Can you not work out the problem of life by putting yourself under the protection of the *law of Love*. If you will but try, Robert, this law will surely lead you to where Freedom reigns supreme.

I need not remind you that nearly two thousand years ago, the Prince of Peace, the great Physician, the Master Metaphysician, said; 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' 'I . . . will manifest myself unto you.' Robert, will you not 'come and see' the healing Christ at work to-day? Will you not come and see his promise in process of fulfilment? Will you not come and see the healing Christ made manifest—the lame walking, the blind with sight restored, the sick healed?

"You know already that you will be asked to believe nothing without proof. There are very many differing sects of Christianity, but Christian Science alone is able to prove its faith by its healing works, done in obedience to the divine command. Will you be less fair in this matter than in a game of cards? Will you not 'prove all things; hold fast that which is good'? Perpetual progress is the eternal law of Mind. Can materialism hope to reverse that which has been since the world began, even the law of Spirit? Upon every side the cry goes up for light; upon every side we see the latest invention shelved to make way for a later yet. Shall *man* alone stagnate? Surely, Robert, this thing cannot be? Rather shall a sinning, suffering world listen to the words of that great Counsellor—the holy Nazarene—words pregnant with a world's salvation. Penetrating through the dust of ages and with tender might sweeping away the false god, materialism, his words point ever upward, ever onward, commanding the sleeper to awaken and to start *now* while it is day, upon the work of all eternity,—*even the acquisition of the knowledge of God, Good.* 'For

this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' And dare we forget that 'now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation?' Late in the nineteenth century Christian Science challenged the world to mortal combat. How has that challenge been answered? By much shouting from those who, in many cases, have not stopped to realise that mere abuse is no argument. But still the healing Christ works on, pure, serene, untroubled by the storm of sensualism and sin: and, wherever it goes, Christian Science turns the thought of man from darkness to the Light, from sickness to health, and lifts it away from the things of earth up into the realm of eternal Mind. Its trail is marked by happy homes, by joyous faces, by quiet prosperity, by an abiding love of Good. Practice *versus* theory, logical simplicity *versus* illogical confusion, result in harmony and health. Do not misunderstand the attitude of Christian Science with regard to the Christian Church. It acknowledges its indebtedness to the Church for having nursed the Truth for nearly two thousand years, but it may no longer be kept in swaddling clothes. The time has come when man must have the Christ Truth, in all its manhood's strength and power as presented over nineteen hundred years ago by the simple Nazarene. It must be divested of man-made creeds and episcopalian ceremony, for 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Every form, every ceremony, every stereotyped prayer are just so many vain 'imaginations,' seated in the place of God, serving only to hide the spiritual idea. Jesus, the Way-shower, directed us with grand simplicity to use just one all-inclusive prayer. He gave us just one all-embracing

commandment; 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . and thy neighbour as thyself.'

"You ask me of the 'Trinity.' First, I will tell you what the Trinity is *not* to the Christian Scientist. It is *not* three Persons in one Person. I will try to tell you a little of what it is to us. *A spiritual Reality, a substantial Actuality,* an infinite Unity of peace and power, a perfect and eternal Entity, 'having neither beginning of days nor end of life,' a living Truth, a deathless Love, a co-equal, co-eternal, forever-indivisible Three-in-One and One-in-Three, *Life, Truth and Love*—even God, Mind. See! you cannot take Love from Life, for who would have life bereft of love? You cannot take Life from Love, for of what worth is a love that has never lived? Naught but a still-born thought is there. You cannot take Truth from either, or you reduce that which is all to a mere negation."

Bishop Saul read Lady Cecil Gwynne's letter through twice, then he rose to ring the bell and gave orders to the servant that he should require nothing more that night, nor must he on any account be disturbed.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

PENIEL

> Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.
>
> —*Genesis.*

For an hour or more Robert Saul sat with Cecil Gwynne's letter in his hand. Again and again the remarkable definition of the "Trinity," which she had therein placed before him, seized upon his thought and, lifting it, held it to a point to which it never had before attained—an altitude so high indeed, that he declared no mortal might stand upon such holy ground and live. Rising abruptly from his seat, he went to his bureau and unlocked a drawer from which he withdrew a little book. Resolved to carry through his resolution, he had written to a London library and from there had borrowed a copy of the Chistian Science text book, but so far, he had refrained from opening it. Now, however, the eleventh hour was upon him, and his sermon must be ready upon the morrow. Seating himself in front of his desk, he wrote steadily, picking out a line here and there and interpreting it to suit his own determination. To a certain extent, perhaps, he did this unconsciously, but not altogether so; and he knew quite well that he was not acting as he would have wished a brother to act towards him.

He knew very well that no book can be fairly reviewed by a mind already made up against it. At last his sermon was finished and he was perfectly aware that it amounted to neither less nor more than an antagonistic criticism of the Christian Science text book. Bishop Saul knew that the gist of a book cannot be fairly set before a body of people by the isolation of short passages disconnected from their context. But he intended to preach upon this subject before twelve hours should pass, and he was upon the whole satisfied with the sermon which he had written. It was, he concluded, cleverly written and much more even in tone than that first sermon which he had preached upon Christian Science. He did not, however, admit, even to his own mind, that this was a less honest utterance than the former, and that, while writing it, he had been obliged to send away unanswered—because he would not pause to answer them—certain questions which had persistently presented themselves to him while he wrote.

It was late now, and he suddenly felt very tired. He arranged his sermon neatly in its soft leather cover and tied a ribbon which thus held it safe. Opening a drawer, he placed it within, and then carefully shutting and locking the drawer he went upstairs.

Whenever his little nephew was at home, it was Bishop Saul's invariable custom to turn aside, on his way to his own bedroom at night, to enter the child's room. Malcolm always slept with his blind up and the window open, and the cool air which greeted Robert Saul as he opened the door, was grateful and refreshing.

He pressed a button on the wall and thus turned up an electric light, which was placed behind the boy's

bed. He himself had interviewed the workmen about the lighting of the room, and had ordered this particular fitting to be carefully shaded so that the light should not inconvenience Malcolm when asleep.

He now bent over the boy and breathed a soft prayer of thanksgiving for his perfect restoration to health. As he stood watching him, Malcolm threw his right arm above his head with a free gesture, and Robert Saul noted the rounded curves which now replaced the sharp lines that once had outlined the child's face and form. Involuntarily, he compared his nightly visits of late with those weary pain-fraught vigils of a year ago; and again he breathed the words, "Thank God."

As he did so, the boy stirred in his sleep. Opening his eyes he smiled at the grave face bent over him, then lifted his arm and flung it round his uncle's neck. Robert kissed him tenderly and arranged the bedclothes more cosily around his one ewe lamb, bending low as he did so in order that he might not lose the full sweetness of the child's soft "Good-night." But instantly he lifted his head and stood suddenly upright, for what had the clear young voice said, as the boy turned happily upon his side and slept once more.

"Thank God for *Christian Science*."

Bishop Saul's face was stern as he seated himself in the high armchair which he often occupied while superintending some small personal matter for Malcolm: and, as he sat there, those questions which had been swimming only just below the surface of his deliberate thought all the evening, once more presented themselves. This time they remained with him, until he turned and gave them full reply. His face showed signs of the hot argument within him. For a long time

he sat there in a rigid silence, and when finally he rose he left the room rather noisily, and a little hurriedly. Forgetful, for once, of Malcolm's comfort, he did not turn off the light, and the child, awakened perhaps by the noise of his uncle's departure, opened his eyes in time to see his disturbed face clearly reflected in a mirror which hung upon the wall opposite to his bed. Malcolm, in his turn, became thoughtful and lay long awake though with his eyes closed.

Presently he rose from his bed, and went to the Bishop's room. "Uncle Robert" was not there, and instantly the child understood that old habit had called the man forth upon one of those midnight rambles in which he used so often to indulge. Going to the window, he discerned the Bishop's tall figure as he walked slowly across the lawn. The night was a dark one, but a bright street lamp threw a path of light across the further end of the short drive, and Malcolm saw his uncle unlock the side gate and carefully relock it upon the other side: he watched him as he turned in the direction of the open country.

Then the boy went back to his room, but not to sleep; there was work to do, and his it was to do it. Evidently "Uncle Robert" needed help, and of course the help was already his. To-night Malcolm had his own little battle to fight. In after years he looked back upon that night, and it then appeared, by the light of greater victories, a very small thing that he had done; yet, at the time, the battle seemed a fierce one, and the soldier young to carry all before him. For, minute by minute, he needed to hold his own against the schoolboy sleep that sought to weigh his eyelids down; step by step, he must beat his enemy back, till untimely

slumber should flee before him; nor did he break his faithful watch until the light of day brought with it full measure of joy, pressed down and running over.

But the night was still around both man and boy when Malcolm first arose and took his stand upon the watch tower; while Bishop Saul, knowing nothing of the little sentinel who mounted guard over him, walked steadily onwards through the darkness. Leaving the town behind him, he at last reached a favourite spot. The country was wild and rugged here at the head of this rocky glen, where he and Malcolm often rested during their rambles across the beautiful country surrounding the old city of Exminster.

Bishop Saul did not sit down, but leant a little heavily—for he seemed to be strangely tired—against a young tree, which he and Malcolm always used as a landmark. And just there, where he and the thoughtful child had held many a sage conversation, he now sought and obtained answer to the question of the ages—"What is truth?"

But not easily did he yield obedience to the answer when it came; not readily did he turn to follow the guiding star which he now saw had arisen for him. For such a man it was doubly hard to journey to the spot "where the young child lay"; it was doubly hard for such an one to worship Mind where matter had sat so long enthroned; to pull down cherished idols one by one, to bow low, and lower yet, is ever hard to the pride of life and power. Sore was the travail of that new birth: right bitter was that human cry, born of those death-throes which must precede the mortal's ascent from matter into Mind. Once only did that awful cry, as of a man in fearful pain, master the

strong will that sought to silence it; pressing its way out into the night, it crept down the rocky gorge like a homeless wanderer seeking rest and finding none, till its life was lost amid the very echoes to which it had given birth. For the most part the man wrestled silently. Through the long hours he stood there almost motionless. With his arms folded high across his breast and his head sunk low, he seemed a monument carved upon the semi-darkness. Once and once again his form shook with the raging of the storm within, while, like the fierce growl of a beast at bay, low mutterings forced their way between his straightened lips.

Then a great silence bound him, nor did it let him go until the day broke, and Freedom claimed him for her own.

Robert Saul knew not how to do a thing at all, unless he did that thing most wholly; and as the white light of the early dawn baptised him with its promise of a new-born day, he homed within his breast the angels which, throughout that night of pain, he had been entertaining unawares. Now learning for the first time the true lesson of the cross, he lifted his awakened vision far above the crucifix, and sought "the resurrection and the life." Thus he turned forever from the creed of man to the holy law of God; and thus we leave him, nor seek to ask further question of his lonely vigil; for man must ever bear his Gethsemane alone, nor may he climb the hill of Calvary save he lean only upon the "everlasting arms."

. . . . .

Nay! pity him not, ye men and women of the world; pity him not, for his redemption draweth nigh. What

if the mortal throes sear through the flesh as might liquid fire? After the crucifixion cometh the resurrection. "The burning fiery furnace" will but loosen his bonds: and now, behold him free, walking amid the flames with one whose form "is like the Son of God"!

Oh, ye, who play with glittering phantasies; oh, ye, whose all is but an empty dream! Pity him not: but turn and leave him. Tread softly and with shoeless feet, for the place whereon ye gaze is holy ground. Leave him with his risen Christ; leave him with the Prince of Peace.

And haste ye, haste, ye men and women of the world! Go get ye oil and trim your lamps, for the bridegroom tarries not for those who slumber, nor for those who sleep. Haste ye, haste! and don your wedding robes! see quickly to your spotless white, that when the call to you shall come, ye too may take your stand with that great multitude who, all radiantly apparelled, working, watching, praying, ever praise Him day and night singing Holy, Holy, Holy, the First, the Last, the Evermore-Shall-Be. Then from the great white throne shall come the benediction:— "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

Thus shall "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," one day "see His face" and receive His name upon their foreheads.

CHAPTER XXXIX

OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT

> Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul!
> As the swift seasons roll,
> Leave thy low-vaulted past:
> Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
> Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
> Till thou at length art free,
> Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.
>
> —*Lowell.*

The nameless stir of early morning! A white-robed child upon the stair; a man's firm tread and sudden halt. Then! one short moment wonder-filled; and then —a little child sobbing softly, upon the throbbing heart of a grateful man; and after—slow speech, each word a soft caress, "Malcolm, little Malcolm! have you watched the night with me?"

. . . . .

The beautiful old cathedral was filled with men and women eager to hear the Bishop of Exminster preach. Many, only in the city for the harvest week, had arranged to stay over the Sunday on purpose to attend this service, and many others had travelled far that lovely autumn morning, drawn partly by a desire to judge for themselves whether Bishop Saul were as highly gifted as the world said, and partly by a less conscious, but not less strong desire, to hear what were the views of so great a man upon the much vexed

question of Christian Science. The choir had just begun the rendering of the anthem, when a woman, hard and colourless of face, and dressed in the grey uniform of a hospital nurse, might have been seen, had any chanced to observe her, standing among the great elms which lined the central walk of the Close. She held a half-sheet of paper in her hand and smiled as she read the words upon it.

"Best," she muttered, "for him to have abided by that other half and parted with the boy for a time only, when ill. Now, he shall pay me well for this postscript of a later date, or part with the child for ever."

Placing the paper in her breast she hurried towards the western door and pushed her way through the disappointed numbers who were now leaving the door.

"It's no use," a good-natured yeoman told her, "there wasn't room for a baby long before the service began, and hundreds have gone away disappointed."

"I *must* get in," she exclaimed sharply, "I'm wanted by a sick lady inside."

"Is that so? Well, come along and we'll see if we can squeeze a little 'un like you through, but I'm thinking that, unless you know just where to look for your 'sick lady,' she'll be long in wanting you."

Thus they fought an opening through the crowd, and the woman, using her lie with good effect, stood at last well up in the middle aisle. Her face wore a strained and anxious look. Money she must have, money she would have, and she had come to listen to this sermon in order to see just how much that half-sheet of paper which she carried was now worth. "Fool," she mentally exclaimed, "blind fool! never to

see that I had torn the letter apart;" and the lines about her mouth became more straight as she remembered that the aftermath, which her hand controlled, was like to bow a proud head to the dust and break a heart which had dared once again to hope. "If," she argued, "if he hates Christian Science as he hated it a year ago, I will ask a fat lump for the letter now. If he loves the child as much as people say he does, he will pay me a right good fistful for it."

She could not see Bishop Saul from where she stood, and it was not until the choir commenced the singing of the second hymn and he mounted the pulpit steps, that he became visible to the majority present.

Every head was instantly raised, and every eye observed the man, who was freely spoken of as England's future Archbishop.

Upon this occasion many had expected Bishop Saul, whose ritualistic views were well known, to wear his mitre, but he did not. Very imposing nevertheless was the central figure in that great church. Robert Saul had always been one of those whom men turn to look at. His athletic form and his fine head made him a noticeable man anywhere. To-day, he stood alone. Clothed in the robes which marked his office, the light falling full upon his face and dyeing to a brighter crimson the hood he wore, he drew the thought of the multitude upon him; and many present asked themselves, had they ever before seen so grand a man? As a boy he had always carried himself beyond his years and seemed to set man's calendar at naught. To-day, strangers, studying his appearance for the first time, decided that after all he was not so young a bishop as repute declared him to be. That was the first impres-

sion, followed later by the thought that it was impossible to approximate the age of anyone, whose face became suddenly transformed when he smiled. He did not speak at first. Indeed, it seemed a long time that he stood there stationary and calm, not looking at the unnumbered crowd below him, but gazing intently at a child who sat beneath the pulpit steps. The boy suddenly raised his bright eyes and smiled up in the man's face, and those who were wont to speak of Bishop Saul's dark eyes as gloomy, and who thought his beauty marred by oversternness, would not have said it then; for as his eyes rested upon the boy's sweet face, they gave back smile for smile.

A watching woman in the throng closed her hand upon a letter which she carried next her breast, and her mouth hardened as she observed the two. "Good," she murmured in her heart, "I will ask another hundred of my lord!"

And now the Bishop raised his head and gave forth his text:—

"In the Epistle of Paul to Titus, in the first chapter and the seventh verse," he said, "is the following declaration:—

"'For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry;' and in the Acts of the Apostles, in the first chapter and the twentieth verse, we read these words; 'Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishoprick let another take.'"

Bishop Saul paused, and the whole of that vast company were stirred by the presence of something which they felt was in their midst, but which had not yet declared its form. At first the Bishop's voice had

shaken while he spoke, but as he uttered the last part of his strangely chosen text, the words rang out clear and strong and reached the farthest corner of the building.

Only Malcolm understood. His face flushed a little, and his eyelids dropped over his eyes while his heart was filled with prayer and praise. Robert Saul looked at the child, and he too understood—understood that a brother's hand had reached him in the dark and would not let him tread the winepress quite alone. Wonderously upheld, he immediately took up his theme and never wavered till the last word was said.

"My brothers and my sisters"—and the Bishop's voice was very clear and strangely quiet in its tone—"I, your Bishop, have a short story to tell you, a true story—the story of a man's mistake. This man had always led a lonely life, and always he had hungered to be loved. One day, he found himself beloved, and that he was (or so he thought) no longer hungry. But something came (or so he thought) between him and the one who loved him. Then he, 'self-willed' and 'soon angry,' pushed the one who loved him from his breast and nurtured hatred in his heart for the thing that had, so he declared, separated him from her who loved him. And he vowed that he would slay this thing, but found that he could not do so. For it grew in beauty and in grace in spite of all that he could do. It saved the sinner, and it healed the sick, in spite of pride of priestcraft and of power. At every turn it mastered him; but still he fought it and hated it the more. And all the time he hungered to be loved; he hungered also for renown, for place and power; and for honour second only to a king's.

"Then one day there came into his life a second love—a sister in need of help. A gentle little wayside flower. He took her to his heart and was less hungry than before, and he loved that sister's child. When once again, the thing he hated came between him and his love (or so he thought) . . . therefore . . . he stole that child, and . . . killed that sister. Then he took that sister's child and folded *him* within his heart, and for the third time love was his, and this time he swore that he would keep it, come what would. And *for the third time*, the thing he hated rose up and asked of him his love—the child! A woman, she who had stood beside the death-bed of his sister, stood before him with a calculating face and said, 'I hold a document—a legal document, though written by a dying hand—which says that your ward shall be cared for, if ill, not by you but by a stranger whose name you scarcely know.' But he knew the stranger's name full well: and one other thing besides he knew—that this stranger loved the thing which he himself hated most in all the world, and so . . . he gave that woman money, and thus he kept the child and loved him, as it seemed to him, with an everlasting love. Then as the days passed by, he asked the child to love him back again, so that he might not be hungry night and day. The child was rich, and the man was very poor, for he had lost all that the child possessed and, of course, had paid it back even unto the uttermost farthing. But he did not tell the child that he was rich, for he said in his heart; 'The boy must look to me for everything, and learn to lean on me alone!' Dishonest? Yes—but—he loved the child; and asked only that the child should love him back again. And so

he did; and the man's heart-hunger was stayed awhile. But as the days pased on, the months brought only pain, for the child sickened and almost died. Then a strange thing happened. This thing, which the man had tried to kill—this thing that he had hated with a deadly hate—rose up once more and placed the child, *now living*, in his arms. What more could he want, for place and power were also his, and honour and renown, but still—he was often hungry, and still he tried to slay that which had given him back his almost dead.

"My brothers and my sisters, you have heard that 'a bishop must be blameless,' 'not self-willed, not soon angry.' What think you? I am that man!"

As the modulated voice dropped low and ceased its utterance, a great silence reigned, and every eye was held to one point in that vast throng, for Robert Saul, with action unpremeditated yet very calm, unloosed the lawn about his neck, and raising hands which trembled, though none knew it, he lifted the hood above his head and laid it across the pulpit rail. Quietly, and without haste, he unfastened the white frilled sleeves and drew robe and surplice gently off. His cassock he unbuttoned with fingers now quite firm and folded it beside the hood. And that silent congregation, in awe-struck wonder, watched him, shocked beyond measure at that which was happening in their midst. None moved, none lowered their gaze from the Bishop's form, as he stood before them garbed in the quiet dress of an English gentleman. Yes! someone stirred. A woman, her colourless face now dyed red with wrath, pushed and elbowed her way down the aisle towards the western door. "Fool!" she muttered, "fool! to wait

so long! now, I am undone!" But none noticed her, none took their steadfast gaze from Bishop Saul. Yes! one other moved. A child rose from his seat, and swiftly mounted the pulpit steps; and now a flaxen head and a boy's young face was visible above the carved oak rail; then a little hand rested upon the strong white hand of Robert Saul, as a child's clear treble, sweet and strong, broke the strange silence which possessed the attentive throng.

"Uncle! I am here."

That was all that the boy could say, and it was almost more than Robert Saul knew how to bear. Now women wept, though silently, and men's stern faces grew more stern.

Robert Saul covered the boy's hand with his own, and thus they stood together side by side. And now the man's musical voice, overflowing with a note of gladness, reached every waiting heart, as he repeated softly and slowly the last words of his text: "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein, and his bishoprick let another take."

Now the women trembled but were silent, and men sat very still, as is the manner of the English-born whose hearts are overfull; for man and boy had turned and, hand in hand, descended the pulpit steps. Reaching the head of the nave, Robert Saul paused upon the top step of the chancel, and standing there, the light from a near window rested upon his dark head, while it lit into a softer radiance the gold of the boy's bright hair.

Suddenly the man threw his shoulders back and held one arm behind him with an easy grace.

"My brothers and my sisters," he said—his voice

was now stronger than before, and buoyant with a new-born strength—"this thing of which I have told you bears a little-honoured name, and yet it is a name which indicates, as I now understand, that for which many men have long been waiting—a religion that is also scientific. I had promised to preach to you to-day upon the subject of Christian Science, but now I do not dare to preach to you at all; and moreover, if I would, I could not tell you of that of which I myself have yet to learn by far the greater part. I have told you that Christian Science has given me back my almost dead, but I believe that it holds a blessing greater by far than that, for those whose hearts are hungering for the answer to Pilate's question, 'What is truth?' I believe that it holds deep within its heart the answer to that great question of the ages: and this is what I have to say; 'Come and see.' Look away from man-made theories, and search for the eternal Principle of life. Look up above the crucifix, and there you will find the *risen* Christ. Look away from the creeds of men, upwards and onwards, to the law of God. Above all, cease to hate and learn to love."

Robert Saul paused a moment and then leant forward a little, his face so softened by the thought within, that it sped his message home to many a tired heart.

"My brothers and my sisters, farewell! I go in search of the Nazarene."

As the man and boy moved in silence down the crowded aisle, a path opened where none had seemed to be, and every eye followed the man's great form and the boy's fair head; but before they could reach the western door a woman's voice cut its way half

across the church and the next moment she stood before Robert Saul. He knew her instantly—the woman from whom he had bought Malcolm! She was close to him now, in spite of the crowd that turned to hold her back, and she was beside herself with malice and only half knew what she did.

"Curse you," she hissed, "curse your blubbering confession, for the work of a white-livered fool!"

Robert Saul had halted at the first sound of her voice, and as she directed her words full upon him, the wild passion, which had many times in his life swept him before it, now drove the flaming colour into his face. But it could do no more, for its day was done, and as the red blood surged from brow to neck, it left the man's face pure and very calm. Then he knew, as he stood there victorious, that he was freed from the sin which he had fought so unsuccessfully until this hour, and that thus he stood upon a higher height than heretofore. Now, once more, Malcolm held his uncle's hand a little hard; once more, the boy raised his clear eyes to those of the man; once more, brother helped brother a little further up the great ascent, and then the man spoke.

Every eye was drawn to the now isolated group; every consciousness was attentive, and by far the majority of that large concourse realised that they stood in the presence of a new power, and as they noted the man's quiet strength and the beauty of his face, etherealised by recent travail of the flesh, they were half prepared for the calm words which followed.

"My sister,"—Robert Saul's beautiful voice now penetrated to the utmost aisle—"we have much to forgive each other. Shall we not begin at once?" Then

taking one step forward and bending from his great height, he lifted the woman's hand in his.

When, a moment later he turned and passed through the western door, those hundreds who had gathered together to hear Bishop Saul preach that day, dispersed in grave silence, and many carried the memory of his face with them, as they, too, turned to journey up "the mountain," while to the hungry heart there came that day a heavenly visitant from on high—the still small voice of Love!

CHAPTER XL

A LONELY BARQUE UPON THE MIGHTY DEEP

Onward, Christian, though the region
Where thou art be drear and lone,
God hath set a guardian legion
Very near thee,—press thou on!

By the thorn-road, and none other,
Is the mount of vision won;
Tread it without shrinking, brother!
Jesus trod it,—press thou on!

By thy trustful, calm endeavour,
Guiding, cheering, like the sun;
Earth-bound hearts thou shalt deliver,
Oh, for their sake,—press thou on!

—*S. Johnson.*

EARLY the next afternoon Robert Saul stood before Lady Cecil Gwynne. She had felt sure that he would come and had given orders that she was "at home" to no one else that day.

As she rose from before her writing-table to receive him, Cecil Gwynne became instantly aware of a great alteration in the appearance of the man who stood before her. Doubtless the heather-mixture tweeds which he wore partly accounted for his air of freedom. The rough suit was indeed an old friend and was associated in Robert's mind with holiday tramps across the moors of Scotland in the days when he was still in a measure his own master and had spent many a long hour shooting or fishing in the Highlands. It had sur-

prised him that morning to find the friendly home-spun still in his possession.

But Cecil knew that rough brown, in the place of smooth black, was not alone enough to account for the change which she now observed in Robert Saul. His face, fine-drawn, showed signs of recent suffering, and yet he looked less anxious and even younger than before. His manner was perfectly composed; that, it usually was; but to-day the whole man seemed to be possessed of a new reserve of power, which somehow overruled his emphatic personality, while adding to his strength.

"I have come, Cecil," Mr. Saul spoke a little quickly, "to say 'good-bye.' Of course you have seen the morning papers? Malcolm is now with his guardians, Mr. and Mrs. Meade, who I find know you quite well. Will you," he hesitated a little, "will you watch over the boy for me, while I am out of England? Mr. Meade is quite willing that every important decision should be referred to you before final action is taken. Naturally it will be easier for me," he paused, but only for a moment, "to leave the child, if I feel that you will do a mother's part towards him."

"Of course I will, and I shall be loving all the time to do it; but you?"

"I?" Mr. Saul moved towards the window and looked steadily away from Cecil Gwynne. After a long time he turned and, crossing the room, stood beside her chair. Very close he stood, and his hands trembled as he held them to his side. "I," he repeated, and now he smiled a little, "I have what seems to me to be a great battle to fight. When I have fought it, I shall stand before you again."

Cecil did not answer for a while. She understood so well all that this man had suffered and knew perhaps better than he did, that he still must suffer, because the road from sense to Soul is uphill all the way, and there are dark mountain passes thereon which must be breasted by each traveller—and alone. This Cecil Gwynne knew better than the man before her could know it as *yet*, for she realised that the heights of Mind are only won through sore travail of the flesh. Her voice, when at last she answered him, was soft and more tender than Robert had ever known it to be, and it did not make his resolution less hard to keep.

"Malcolm and I——"; she ceased speaking, for Robert Saul's face had suddenly grown stern, and it seemed that he had borne all that he then could bear.

By-and-by they talked again, and when, an hour later, Robert rose to go, he had already well begun that fight which ever leaves the soldier stronger than before.

He was wonderfully calm and gentler than ever in his life before, when he held Cecil's hand in farewell. "You know, of course, why I do not speak of my love for you," he said; "I may not, until I have well begun the climb. But some day, sweetheart, I shall return; some day I shall most surely return, and then——"

He lingered a moment, but Cecil Gwynne did not attempt to keep him. She could not make that which he had to do easier, and she would not make it more hard; for the proud man, humbled, touched her as he never had touched her when at the zenith of his pride.

A week later Robert Saul left England; and on the day of his embarkation for Africa, those who loved him

best were by his side to bid him lovingly, "God-speed." The Duke and Duchess of Westmoreland were there. Robby Campbell and his brother James, Margaret Courcy and Cecil Gwynne, and lastly—Malcolm.

Time was almost up as Robert called the boy to him. Together they paced the deck, and what he said to the child was for Malcolm's ears alone. The first warning bell had sounded, as Mr. Saul turned to say good-bye to the little group of friends who stood upon the main deck, and still he kept the boy's hand within his own. The others had now left the ship and Cecil's foot was upon the gangway, when Robert Saul strode to her side. Without a word she gave him her hand and returned the steady look which he bent upon her. Then suddenly he stooped towards Malcolm, and lifting him to his breast he wrapped his arms about the boy and held him in a close embrace. Malcolm was sobbing now, and Robert gently put him down and folded the child's small hand within Cecil's loving clasp.

"Yours," he said, and his strong voice shook a little, "yours—until I return to claim you both."

Cecil's face was very grave, but it seemed to Robert, as he looked again into her eyes, seeking the promise that her trembling lips could not—or would not—give him, that they were like the sweet Alpine gentian drenched in dew, yet smiling all the time beneath the kiss of Hope's brave sunlight.

From the shore, the little band of friends watched the ship get slowly under way, and they remained silently gazing after her as she moved towards the open sea. As she rounded a bend of the river, Mr. Saul passed from their sight, standing exactly as he had stood since that last good-bye—a lonely figure,

calm and strong; a thing apart, grand in the isolation of a great resolve; a man whose heart had wakened to a throbbing love for all mankind.

. . . . .

Courage, Robert Saul. For surely thou dost journey up and on, thus winning thy way "out of darkness into his marvellous light."

Courage! all ye who stand enrolled in the army of the Lord—ye soldiers of the healing Christ. Courage! for see! Freedom's white banner is unfurled and waves right bravely in the sun. Courage! ye old men and women. Courage! ye young men and maidens. Courage! ye little children. "The battle is the Lord's!" Hold within your ears the ringing cheer, "Forward! ever forward, up and on." Utter with *one* voice the battle cry, "Peace on earth, good will towards men." Take within your hand the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." *Hold within your heart the silent prayer.* Thus, loving Good supremely and self not at all, the Truth shall be your shield and buckler; your helmet,—Life eternal; and your breastplate,—Love divine. *Wrap thee round with living love and sweet humility,* and thus equipped, the poisoned arrow cannot reach you. Thus equipped, ye shall stand unharmed while error falls upon the battlefield of Armageddon.

CHAPTER XLI

SCALING THE HIGHER HEIGHTS

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of the seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

—*Whittier.*

A WOMAN, young and with a face both sweet and grave, held an unopened letter in her hand. She sat so still that a great Newfoundland dog rose from the sunny spot which he had chosen for his own and gently pushed his noble head against her arm. She raised her hand and rested it upon his neck, until, satisfied by the soft caress, he turned and spread himself upon the cabin floor beside her chair. Lifting his chin a little, he laid it upon the white canvas of her shoe, knowing that she had need of his silent love.

Still the letter remained unopened while the woman turned her thought upon a scene which she had lately left. A fetid den, disgracing the richest country in the world! a child's white face, and pitiful eyes! a mother, drunk and steeped in sin! Foul air, teeming with counterfeit life! In short—unholy thought manifested in most unholy pain! But Mind had conquered

as Mind ever must and will. The child's weak moan had ceased, for Love had sent the angels of His Presence to encamp about him and thus delivered him; and Life had wakened the weary thought to restful rest, while Truth had fed the hungering heart and freed the crippled limbs. Thus, one more of God's little ones, discerning the Light, had risen to new activity and joyous life. But what of those others, those countless thousands who, by day and night, send up their mute, unconscious cry for help? Cecil Gwynne knew of sin more black and sorrow more profound, which only voiced itself in voiceless pain; and as her heart sent forth the importunate cry, "How long, O Lord, how long?" penetrating throughout the ages, strong and clear, the sweet answer of the healing Christ sounded in her heart, "Lo, I am with you alway;" and the glory of that promise, given to "all nations and kindreds," filled her with a new-born peace and drove the shadow of the past away. With the slow touch of one possessed by the power of deep thought, she broke the seal of the letter which still lay upon her hand and read it slowly through.

Presently she folded and placed it carefully in her desk. Then, leaving the cabin, she went forward upon the deck and threw her arm about the mast. The wind was high and blew stiffly in her face, sometimes lifting the spray and sweeping it across her form. She loved the freshness of its cool, wet touch, though for the most part she did not notice it, for her heart was full of praise and sent up an ever-rising psalm of gratitude. Peace and power, rapture and rest, swelled the sweet refrain that held her mute, while the silence of Love possessed her soul.

Later, a tall lad joined her, and, confident of a loving welcome, he slipped his arm through hers and stood for a long time silently by her side.

"I have heard from Angola to-day," she said at last. "Uncle Robert asks, 'Has Malcolm yet decided upon his future career, the army or the university,' which shall it be?"

"Oxford first," the lad answered without a moment's hesitation.

"Yes," Lady Cecil spoke gravely; "I think you are right, for you know that '*laborare est orare*.' You understand that true wisdom can only be obtained by the reflection of divine Intelligence, and that with all thy getting thou must yet have understanding. And after Oxford?"

The boy drew an inward breath and remained so long silent that Cecil Gwynne turned to look at him. His keen face was full of life, and the firmly set mouth spoke of strong resolve. Deep with earnest purpose, his steadfast gaze looked out upon the waters.

Then he spoke ardently. "And after Oxford! why I decided *that* long ago—the day Uncle Robert left England. . . . And I wish that you could come too!"

Cecil lifted her hand and clasped that of the lad. "You have decided nothing," she said gently; "and my work lies at home. Indeed, the Master's vineyard is so large that we need to pray daily that he will send more labourers of the right sort into it. But for you, dear, why, you will decide nothing yet, for we learn in Science, do we not, 'to let the morrow take thought for itself'? At the appointed time, Truth will lead, and when it does I am sure that you will be ready to go, if

need be, as Abraham went, 'knowing not whither.' Meanwhile it is in the crowded city that sin hides the most easily, and there the labourers may not be too few. Furthermore they must stand ever 'eye to eye' upon the walls."

. . . . . .

Above, the deep, deep blue of the star-flecked heavens—the infinite variety of Mind, mirrored by worlds upon worlds of shining light! Below, the dark bosom of the sea, torn by its own unrest!

With sails full set, the yacht sped swiftly onward through the night, like some mighty bird upon the wing.

The boy stood alone at the starboard bow, and his eyes shone softly with a brave and certain light, as he raised his face towards the vaulted heavens above. Joyously, he held a hope within his heart; and, silently, he sent his answer up to Mind—"Yes, I will be ready."

. . . . . .

We first saw Robert Saul, several years ago, seated before his table, intent upon the writing of a letter to Cecil Gwynne: to-day, he is once more seated before his desk, and again he writes to Cecil Gwynne, and this is what he tells her:—

"Two years I have been waiting to write this to you, my little sister; but at last I can say that I am striving to be content—content to live my life without you by my side. I shall always love you, Cecil. I am only slowly climbing toward that plane of thought which you have reached before me, but at last, my sister, I see; still 'through a glass darkly,' but less darkly every day. The fiery trial has been mine, but the baptism of tears has washed away the

dross of selfish desire, revealing something of that selfless love which holds the brotherhood of man with bonds which never can be severed. For what can separate those who are consciously united in the one great Mind and who, ever 'eye to eye,' press always on and up? To me has already come, in some measure, that peace and joy *which come of understanding*, and which truly 'passeth all understanding.' It is worth all that has been—all that I know must yet be—to see these poor heathen learning to understand something of *Good*, the only true *God*,—omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Love. It is worth it all, to see them ceasing to hate and learning to love. And the little children! But you know better than I what it means to watch the pure child thought unfold in Mind, revealing the whiteness of Soul. So, little sister, Good-bye. The call has come, bidding me work out the harder problem in one of the great cities of the earth, where the need is urgent and the labourers still too few, and I am ready, little sister, to obey.

"It is with a heart full of joy that I make my preparations to return to England. As you know, the Duke and Duchess of Westmoreland are at work in a busy centre where I shall shortly join them; and Robby Campbell is also there. Then Malcolm will always spend the long vacation with me. Lady Margaret often writes to me,—happy letters, full of that vitalising loving kindness which characterises her every word and work—and I am at rest, remembering that she is by your side, ready to help you should you ever need the touch of a brother's hand. Thus the joyous work goes on, *and will*, 'until we all come in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a

perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' "

. . . . .

It was early morning. A little child, round of face and bright of eye, whose smooth black limbs spoke of suppleness and strength, pulled at its mother's hand. "Look!" he said, "look, my mother!"

The woman's dark face lightened with a tender smile, as she turned and watched a white man cross the head of the plantain grove and swiftly ascend a rugged mountain path. Then she bent and kissed the child. "Beloved," she said (her heart had rested upon the sweet English word, and she had made the white man tell her something of what it meant), "beloved,"—and with soft accent she lingered over the syllable which had to-day much meaning for her—"yesterday the white man said this to me, 'It is not the will of your Heavenly Father that one of His little one should perish,' and to-day! why to-day, he has proved those words to me, for to-day, he has given thee back to me"—and the woman lifted the child and held him to her breast, while she crooned soft words above his head—"when I thought that thou was mine no more; back to my heart, my little one, my dear beloved."

And what of the white man? Pursuing the road which winds at first, but presently turns abruptly and narrows into a scarcely visible track, which leads straight up the now rapidly rising ground, he presently reaches an open plateau. From this height the view is superb, and he turns to rest beneath a slender acacia tree, laden with its snow-white blossom, while he drinks of the beauty which surrounds him upon every side.

This is the hour of his repose. A look of deep content settles upon the refined face, and a light of great gladness shines from the gentle eyes.

It is yet very early, and all nature is fresh and glad. Robed in imperial purple, the "morning glory" opens its heart to the sun. Revelling in its strength and freedom, the great convolvulus trails its radiant loveliness in gorgeous profusion over rounded knoll and yielding branch. The white hybiscus shines forth in all its purity and, like a shower of forgotten stars, baptises the earth with its petals of silver and its heart of gold, while the palm-decked land stands ready to receive the coming brightness of the early day. Now the veil of cloud is rent in twain, as, revealed in all his majesty of light and power, the sun gleams forth, from glory unto glory, opening, with caressing touch, each leaflet and each bell. Kissing the night's tears all away, he wakes to jewelled splendour the dew on grassy blade and bending bough. Thus reigning supreme o'er earth and sky, he symbolises the everlasting Love, forever expressed in power and in light.

Here let us leave Robert Saul. He stands watching and praying, as might some strong sentinel, keeping lone vigil at a far off post.

We leave him where he loves best to be, standing waiting, with the pure loveliness of the new day about his feet and the radiance of heaven upon his brow, but, ere we turn away, let us listen with heads bent low and hearts at peace to the consecration of a life. Impelled by holy thought, ever looking upward, pressing onward, these words well up in a heart that is overfull, and find soft utterance through reverent lips.

"Love, oh, Love! I thank Thee that Thou hast

called me to labour in the vineyard of the Lord. Eternal Trinity of Life and Truth and Love! My past, my present and my future, all are Thine. Father, I know that, ere I can call, Thou hast answered me. I know that, while I yet speak, Thou hast heard my prayer. 'At the time appointed' Thou wilt reveal the Truth to all mankind—the Fatherhood of Life, the Motherhood of Love, the Brotherhood of man, the glories of a universe in Mind. And I thank Thee, even through all eternity, I thank Thee.

"Oh, holy Nazarene! now as aforetime Woman sits silent at the feet of Truth and learns again the eternal lore of Love. Oh, healing Christ! thou loving Saviour of the world, the free-born, bending, touch thy seamless robe; prostrate, they kiss the hem of purity and peace; and rise to follow Thee, while the 'white wings of the Holy Ghost' brood o'er each upward path, translating matter into Mind. Thus are the meek baptised anew in a living love for infinite Good; thus shall a universe, including man, one day reflect its God."

EPILOGUE

> And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
>
> —*Joshua.*

A WOMAN stands high upon a wide hillside, beneath a dome of golden light, and points to the mountain peaks above.

Like a tender benediction, her farewell falls upon the waiting thought that fain would tread the winepress by her side.

"Nay, dear heart! I would not wed as mortals wed. *Yet—'tis not for me to say what thou should'st do;* nor may man make by use of mortal will a single move in front of God, for 'tis only by *reflecting* Mind that he can safely scale the heights from sense to Soul. Moreover, man is ever individual, and ever free to choose or lose the best—to wed himself to God, or to give his life for that which is not gold. Yet, while I take my hand from thine, I point thee to the marriage of the Lamb and tell thee that which I for long have known, that they, who are accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection, neither marry nor desire to be given in marriage, but are ever as the angels—'complete in him.' Thus only can man hope to die no more."

. . . . .

A man stands alone upon a wide hillside, beneath the

full white light of a noonday sun, and searches the rock-ribbed paths beyond. He binds his sandals on his feet and takes his staff in hand, while he whispers to his heart, "God's—will—be—done. Fare thee well, sweet vision of the earth; for ever and for ever fare thee well. That which woman does, with a heart o'erfilled with joy, surely man may likewise do, nor need he thereby suffer any loss. I too would win my way to immortality; I too would be—complete in Mind."

FINIS